

BOOKS BY WALTER WILKINSON

*

THE PEEP-SHOW

"To me a book like 'The Peep-Show' reveals England better than twenty novels written by clever young ladies and gentlemen."

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Manchester Guardian.

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*

PUPPETS THROUGH LANCASHIRE

"A record of the English countryside to which, it is likely, the historians of the future will turn."

The Times Literary Supplement.

WALTER WILKINSON

PUPPETS
THROUGH
AMERICA



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I

PUPPETS ALL AT SEA

LET us go to America!
What! With a small booth as a theatre, a dozen hand-puppets as actors to earn our livings, and all those thousands of miles and bags of expenses to negotiate! Impossible!

But these puppets of ours are very insistent, and they never cease to agitate for new fields in which to wander. They have, too, an audience that entices with suggestions and alluring invitations, and for some years now the silly little wooden heads of our minute actors have been agitated with this idea of going to America.

It is one of the penalties of being a puppet showman. You conceive these characters lightheartedly, and you make them, and from that moment you cease to be your own master. You are dominated by a group of empty-headed characters that insist upon being always young and gay, upon being always in the limelight, upon always showing off and embarrassing you, as children embarrass adults, with a fiendish vitality, quite proper to a puppet or a child, but very difficult for ordinary flesh and blood to sustain. I can see now, that, if it were not for the lethargy of puppet showmen, always dragging in the rear, puppets would sweep the world with an irresistible verve and gaiety.

Let us go to America!

That was easy for the puppets to say, but, as the showman, I was horribly dubious. My spirits went down into my boots and I was in despair. Then Winifred treacher-

ously joined the puppets, and having been to America was certain that kindness, hospitality and understanding awaited us. But as I had never visited the United States I knew, of course, a great deal about it; in my mind was a very clear conception, quite innocent of the least experience, that America was entirely given over to industrialism, to "guys" with a "hunch", ladies with a mission, drinks with a kick, and clever novelists who wallowed cynically in the mess. In this miraculous vision I could see no place for the eccentric little puppet show. "It is all ballyhoo," I cried, with antagonistic fervour, and then began to think that there might be something in the idea.

Had I not met many American men and women who were entirely charming and sympathetic? *Strange*—but I had! Then why persist in nursing this home-made prejudice against their country so rudely? Are there not industrialists, vandals and vulgarians enough in our own country, and yet are they not only a part of the picture? And Winifred had been to the United States, and liked it. She had been invited to come again, and to bring the puppets. Also the Puppeteers of America were to hold their second annual Festival and we had received pressing invitations to attend. Further, a New York publisher, a wonderfully hopeful man, was planning to sell the puppet books, and so, with the attractions beginning to accumulate I found myself—still a little dubious—joining in the chorus.

For some time I had had a suspicion that the United States is the leading country of the world, and that all other countries when they pride themselves on some particular piece of "progress" are only imitating in a small way something that is getting old-fashioned in the States. Naturally I trembled a little at being assailed by such an idea, but you have only to think honestly for one moment to see that it is

true. America leads the world in mass-production, in the extension of the use of credit, in the power to attract foreign capital, and in the development of the Instalment System ; her position in the architectural world is distinctly high you must admit, and who are we imitating, if it is not America, when we instal running water and central heating in our rooms? She leads in mobility—if not in Nobility ; she leads in the Cinema, in the devastating plague of her horrid dance music, in cocktails and soda fountains, in grape fruit, and salads and sandwiches and milk-shakes ; in bathrooms and showers ; in chiropody and bridge playing ; in salesmanship and Hoovers ; in the Woolworth idea of shopping ; and even our slang is the American slang, picked up from the cinema, and ten years dead and gone in America. And then from the recent Spelling Bee on the wireless between Oxford and Harvard it is obvious that England is learning how to spell English from the United States. This was only a cursory glance at the situation ; my courage was not equal to a further examination, but it showed me enough to realise that America is of some weight in the world, and that it might be considered an honour to be allowed to visit her.

It would mean a new kind of puppet travel for us. There could be no walking with a barrow on American roads as we had tramped the English roads. That sort of thing was not done in the States. The ancient tradition of a wandering showman setting up his theatre casually as he travels has grown weak enough in Europe, but in America it does not seem to have existed since the days of the Covered Waggon. The distance between village and town is too great for pedestrianism ; the roads are given over entirely to cars, and to rare travellers without cars—hitch-hikers—who stand in the gutter gesticulating to the passing motorist, thrusting a thumb in the direction they wish to go. So, on the wide

concrete roads there is nothing passing but the shining cars, and a pedestrian with a barrow would amount to little more than an undesirable obstruction.

There was the climate, too. The newspaper reports of heat waves and sudden deaths, the violent storms and heavy downpours of rain all seemed inimical to tramping and camping with a light tent. There was also the size of it all, and if we were to get a comprehensive idea of our lost colony and discover what it was that we had lost, it would be necessary to travel quickly to cover the ground. We would have to travel conventionally by way of engagements, to accept hospitality in cars and houses, to be bourgeois, to travel on money and see what we could of America from that point of view. The plan looked a little tame, and not quite our style, but America is a large country, quite, and anything might happen. So, let us go to America.

Boats! Such a lot of talk about boats, which, I believe, sailors speak of as ships. But we stuck to "boats", evading the *Queen Mary* as altogether too much of a "boat", and examining pictures and descriptions and gossip about "boats" until peaked caps sprouted from our heads, binoculars appeared miraculously over our shoulders, and hypothetical ducks enfolded our legs. It was a process of eliminating "boats" until, as we might have known in the beginning, it came down to the cheaper sort, the one-class "boat", in which you exist a trifle above third class and where there is no shadow above you to prevent you from imagining that you are travelling first class. You also get an outside cabin with portholes, and all the available deck space.

Having decided on the "boat" there was only the matter of buying the tickets—but not so fast! Before the tickets

you buy a passport visa, and on an appointed day Winifred and I travelled nearly fifty miles to London for the sole purpose of obtaining these visas. It is a trite reflection to remember that significant characters who lived hundreds of years ago can still influence our lives, but it was a shock to us on that afternoon in Harley Street, on the steps of No. 2, to find that President George Washington had caused us to spend a couple of pounds in vain. We were confronted with a succinct notice on the door : *Closed on February 22nd.*

"Washington's birthday," muttered a dusky compatriot of the president's, and we came away short of two pounds and with only that very incomplete piece of historical information ; incomplete because the notice had neglected to mention the year.

These particulars may seem very trivial. Winifred had been all through this several times, and probably all other travellers buy their three-thousand-mile tickets with as much nonchalance as they acquire a box of matches. But I was impressed by the large amount we had to pay, and I was anxious to get all the interest and education I could from the transaction. When we did get into the Consulate it was to experience the first subtle character of America. At the head of the stairs was an attendant, a grave, domesticated-looking woman who directed us in a manner that was not exactly distant and not exactly familiar, but something new to me in the manner of attendants. Then, in rather trifling questions, a secretary began to use our names in firm, fellow-man accents, in which practice I seemed to recognise the democratic America, the use of the name corresponding with the republican Frenchman's use of *monsieur*.

We filled in all the forms and rashly confessed that we were taking some puppets into the States, whereupon another form was presented which had to be filled in in

quintuplet. It looked formidable and out of proportion, and formidable it was in the end ; you cannot fill up five official forms and pay eight shillings for the privilege without setting a complicated bureaucracy to work. We paid in time and money before we saw the end of those five forms that covered and took care of our small puppet theatre.

“ Well, and how are you? And have you had a good trip?”

Like two feeble gentlefolk in reduced circumstances we stood on the New York quay, struggling with the strange atmosphere, searching for a brave bearing and a gallant poise with which to meet America and a crowd of friends. In that honest-to-goodness centre of being where one speaks to oneself, I was saying that the steamship advertisements were misleading and that we had not had a good trip. Of what avail is a neat picture of a ship divided into tiny cabins, and specimen menus, and portraits of a cheerful purser and a trusty captain against the Atlantic Ocean?

It was not a trip at all. It was a world without end of nagging movement without a second of respite. We were a day late in arriving, and for eleven days the ship had bumped, plunged, rolled, heaved and jogged its way through a more or less persistent gale. Day and night, hour after hour, every minute it had moved forward against the restless waves, rising, falling, swinging and shuddering. The gale roared and hissed, a harsh, cold wind roaring over the malignant ocean, lashing the waves into foam which dashed over the ship in stinging showers. We staggered and wrestled continually with unseen powers. We grew tired and weak with living on one side, with being tipped backwards and forwards, with clinging to furniture that tilted unexpectedly and continued to tilt until you and the furni-

ture were sliding irresistibly and ignominiously the length of the Social Room. The gong for meals sounded regularly and cheerfully, but every liver, every kidney, every stomach was standing up on end ready to fight all nourishment. Even the Major, imperturbable hero of Foreign Legions and a breeder of race-horses, rose later and later every day, spent more and more time in the bar, and grew noticeably quieter and more incoherent in his tales. And the American old gentleman, who had never been sea-sick, missed a meal or two, picked his way through others that came to a sudden end, and thought he would spend his future vacations in Florida rather than Europe and Asia. And then there was the culminating night when we had to hook a leg under the mattress to keep in the bunks ; when one lady had been pitched out of her bed at the same moment as a suitcase had slid from underneath, and she had taken a ride across the cabin ; when a precise maiden lady had sat up all night trying to tidy the restless furniture ; when a frightful crash on the deck overhead had made us look at our lifebelts, and think that this was the end. In the morning the carpenter was mending broken chairs and tables ; the barman was sweeping out a horrid mess of broken bottles, and cigarettes flooded with liquor, and on deck our particular lifeboat, by which we had been drilled to escape, had been torn from its moorings, boodled about the deck and stove in.

And then came the day, more fantastic than the rest, when the sun shone and we sighted a distant ship in all that desolate waste of waves. As we assembled to see this unusual sign of life, that ship grew bigger and bigger until we realised that we, in the eleven-day boat, were overhauling it. We passed with cheers, and from that moment the tension was relieved. A rackety Gala Dinner brought America the nearer ; we ran into fog, crawled by the Nantucket lightship,

achieved the Ambrose, took the pilot on board, and crawling out of the fog found ourselves in a wide, wide river and in the comforting sight of land revealed by an unending line of lights on the bank.

"Zippy—zip—zip—Zippy!" yelled someone, and creeping forward we came to more lights, and the knowing ones began to point out the Empire State building and the Rockefeller Center, and we were properly thrilled until one young American saw his aunt leaning out of a window, when it was explained to us that the high lights were probably on Coney Island. But at a turn of the river New York burst upon us in full blaze, a huge display of sparkling light, with illuminated ferries like Showboats gliding across the river, and there, in the distance was a small glowing whiteness—the Statue of Liberty.

"Looks a bit smaller, nowadays," remarked an American voice, and a groan went through the crowd.

"Let her go," said a nonchalant voice on the bridge. There was the rattle of chains and a deep splash. We had arrived—but could not land until the morning.

I have the impression that the young passengers spent the night playing shuffle-board on deck, quite a strong impression because the shuffle-board pitch was immediately over our cabin, but we were all on deck early to strain our emotions in attempting an appreciation of the sky-line of New York. It is something of a *faux pas* to enter the United States by way of New York in these days; there is a hackneyed idea going round that New York is not America; it is not characteristic; there is nothing else like it in America, and you are doomed to a false impression if you enter the States that way. But, at all events, it is an impression of something strange and foreign as you glide round the end

of Manhattan Island under those Saurians of the building world, that unique cluster of monster towers and all their myriads of windows, that rise about Wall Street. It is a striking entry to America to say the least, and appropriate, too, for in these crazy erections shooting to the sky is epitomised all the dashing energy, the restless excitement and the foolish dare-devilry that has brought this enormous continent to the end of its easy fortune-making in so short a time.

And yet—in the soft light of the gentle morning those piles of masonry stood mysteriously in misty pinks and greys like temples to some strange religion. They were beautiful. They seemed inevitable, to have grown there naturally like a mass of fantastically pillared cliffs. Slowly we moved round these splendid monsters. There was no sign of human life in them and you could not imagine them being used for any ordinary human purpose. They had a curiously innocent appearance, as if brooding with an age-long wisdom ; they might have been deserted temples abandoned by a race of ingenuous barbarians centuries ago. It is a condition they will achieve before so very long, doubtless. Things move rapidly on Manhattan Island. Already the incredible giants of twenty years ago are dwarfed into nothingness. One passenger returning to her native States after many years absence had difficulty in finding her old landmarks, and when she did discover them they were little grey towers, squiggly little Gothic and Renaissance affairs standing humbly in the shadow of the mighty modern shafts, the erected narrow tubes soaring in straight, severe lines to the sky.

We moved up the river Hudson and quietly berthed—berthed—but there was a lot of waiting about before we could land. In the meantime we attempted to roar out con-

versations with our friends' heads sticking over the barrier of the landing stage. Two puppets suddenly dangled their legs over the barrier, their tiny hands waving at the ship. Although we had not seen them before, they were obviously friends of ours, too, and we waved frantically, photographed them, and were very touched by these deputies from the Puppeteers of America brought by Mr. and Mrs. Otto Kunze. What a lot of waiting! There was America only a few yards off; we kicked our alien heels in agitation at having to restrain our eager attack upon the great country.

And so, ultimately, we arrived at those questions: "How are you? Have you had a good trip?" Friends, puppeteers, publisher's representatives, customs officers, a schedule of engagements, and schedule pronounced "skedule", all demanded simultaneous attention. And then there was the momentous question of steering our famous box of puppets through the customs.

The grim officials were puzzled. They had never handled a company of puppets before. Opera companies, performing cyclists and circuses, yes, but not puppets, and they desired to establish a proper procedure. There were consultations, telephone calls, waiting for an authority to be disengaged, more consultation, more telephone, and an inspection of the innocent puppets. America was up against it! But America was kind, and very exasperated that we had been so honest as to fill up five forms and put a value on the puppets that was far in excess of their estimate. Hand-puppets meant nothing to them; they were practically valueless, and if it had not been for those pink forms they would have been glad to chalk them through for two or three dollars duty. As matters stood something like a hundred dollars was due.

"Oh, Gee! Why did'n' you put it at fifty darllars—and that would have been twenny-five too much!"

PUPPETS ALL AT SEA

By this time we wished we had never been born. Our friends were patient, but had been waiting in the cold morning for some hours on our account, and we were still chained to the landing stage. And that "skedule" was nagging away, filling me with apprehension. We were to lunch with the publisher—I only hoped we might have that pleasure! We were to be interviewed by the press—but I felt our story would never be set-up. We were to catch a train at seven for dinner in a suburb—yes, that would be charming, but presumably we would still be shivering on the landing stage. To-morrow we were to—to-morrow!—Oh, to-morrow be hanged!

What was that! Would we deposit the money under bond and have it refunded on leaving the country? We must take out a bond at the Customs House and in half an hour the matter would be cleared. "Gee! If only you had put it at twenny-five darllars!"

Presently we emerged into the gliding traffic of the New York streets, riding beneath those towering buildings, rubbernecking gladly at the topmost storeys—but—that bond and the "skedule" were an incubus round our necks, and we hardly dared to think of New York. At the Customs House we were soon plunged into a devil of a mess over those little puppets. We mounted marble stairs, crossed deserts of marble pavements, penetrated forbidding doors, and wandered under high and misty domes where it would have been more appropriate to pray than to pay. After three agonising hours of inquiries, frustrations and investigations, and an expedition to the bank for dollars, we emerged with nothing but a receipt for the deposit and the impressive information that this matter must be dealt with in strict accordance with the letter of the law! But the puppets were still in the grip of the authorities.

PUPPETS THROUGH AMERICA

The "skedule" coming into operation after this release we were carried up-town in a beautiful sunny mid-day with the radiant American sun making brilliant exhibition, falling on those immense walls in delicate rose colours, and in white and gold, on the strange, radiant palaces illuminated against a dazzling blue sky. It was warm out of doors, it brought Italy to our minds, but inside the restaurant, still centrally heated for winter, we suffered a semi-tropical heat. Yesterday we were on the cold, grey sea—to-day we were sweltering in unnatural heat, clasping tumblers of iced water and ordering ice cream from the waiter. All our emotions were inextricably mixed. It was April—it was summer—it was America—it was anything. In the publisher's office I surreptitiously removed a cardigan; in the restaurant I got rid of a waistcoat; Winifred handed me a soft bundle to put in my pocket. And so, at the beginning of April, with all that that implies to an English nature, we struggled with fantastic heat, with fantastic slabs of buildings rising mistily into the sun, soaring grandly to the sky, and we clung dimly to a "skedule".

Flash! And we were photographed.

"And now, Mr. Wilkinson!" and I told the world, through an intelligent and gentle interviewer, immense and staggering facts about puppet-showing. In a great store, with lifts, acres of floor space and more central heating a performance was discussed, and after attempting to travel on a Fifth Avenue 'bus during the evening's outpour from all those piled-up rooms, we transferred to a taxi, which, with struggles and radio music, presented us at the roaring Wellington Hotel.

All day we had been occupied with people and affairs, seeing New York out of the corner of the eye, assailed by one impression after another, and now, in the hotel lift, we

were fascinated by the handsome, lithe Negro boy, seeing him through a maze of half-remembered conversations, a great deal of fatigue, and obsessed with the fact that we had just twenty minutes in which to bath and dress and get off the mark for a dinner appointment. We opened the room door in a dream, and crossing the apartment pushed up a window to let out the infernal central heating. With the cool air came an immense physical shock ; the solar plexus was entirely shattered, and we fell on our knees before the low window-sill, spell-bound by the sensation of an enormous lake of darkness before us out of which loomed towering mountains of light.

It was immense. Vague towers loomed enormously in the velvety darkness, and the scattered lights, still or flashing, were like giant sequins spattered over a range of mountains. It was as if we had suddenly moved nearer the stars. It was a charming, sparkling harlequinade on a delirious and fantastic scale. It was New York, utterly and satisfactorily, the appropriate and enchanting end to a long week of grey waves and nothingness. In that small bedroom, balanced on a slender pinnacle of twenty other similar bedrooms, we dressed as if taking part in a circus trick, elated by the dizzy altitude and the sounds and lights of New York far below, away above, and stretching all around us.

It was an anti-climax to be zig-zagged by a crazy taxi to a vast station—or was it a cathedral?—to make a short ride in a long train car and descend in a suburb of separate white houses hiding themselves prettily and modestly among many trees. But it was all a dream, this first day in New York, what with the fantastic palaver about a box of puppets, the tropical heat, the interviews, the terrific buildings, and now the mushroom pies and the celery stalks stuffed with pink cheese for dinner. And would I mind standing behind this chair and

PUPPETS THROUGH AMERICA

make a little speech about puppet showing! All will power was gone, but we drifted along somehow, buoyed up by a strange exhilaration on successive waves that almost swamped us—but not quite—until, somewhere after midnight, we came to rest in that fascinating bedroom balanced on the top of twenty other bedrooms. What a day! But we had liked it all.

II

WE LOOK DOWN ON NEW YORK

“RING Room Service and ask for a Jiffy Breakfast,” advised the card by the telephone at the bedside. But we could not do it. After all we had only been Americans for one day, and we had been photographed and interviewed by the New York press, and had the dignity of the British nation and British puppetry to uphold. We felt like the American in England who would not buy postage stamps because “tuppence ha’penny” was such a silly and impossible phrase to use, and Winifred and I attempted to persuade each other to bawl down a telephone, to which we had not been introduced, the order for two Jiffy Breakfasts.

It was like magic. We had hardly “hung up” when a white-coated Chinese, or Japanese, or Korean gentleman with unmoved features gravely set a covered table before the window and, whipping off a cloth like a conjurer, disclosed the orange juice set in a bed of ice, glasses of iced water, pots of coffee and cream, and hot biscuit, or what we call rolls, fascinating creations, caramelled and stuffed with walnuts. The New York hotel receives full marks for that breakfast. It is one of the essentials of civilised life that, if necessary, one can breakfast in bed or in one’s room, in a comfortable state of *deshabille* without disturbing the moral balance of the *menage*. And it was necessary. Yesterday had been an eighteen-hour day, and the day before us might be as long. The telephone had already invaded us, and while still in pyjamas I had conversed with a strange lady—

which did not seem quite polite—and had also arranged an interview with another photographer. There was a third call while I was in the bath, but nothing will persuade me to talk to strangers, even by telephone, in the nude, and the call was lost.

We were at the Customs House before the clerks had settled down to work. A sheaf of incomprehensible forms trembled in our hands, and a grave official looked at us sternly, saying :

“ This must be conducted in strict accordance with the letter of the law. Are you handling it yourselves, or are you engaging an agent? It is not our work, but you are strangers in our city and I will be very pleased to give you all the assistance I can—but it will mean several hours’ work for you.”

That was a fair and manly declaration which we could appreciate, and we were not long in deciding that strangers should not be a nuisance. We decided to engage an agent, and sought him out in a plain little room filled with cigar-smoking clerks standing at high desks, while pictures of champion baseball players looked on from the white-washed walls.

There is an air of magnificence about cigar-smoking and sportiveness about players, and we parted with another five dollars with a mere wave of the hand, while our agent discoursed upon his recent visit to England and his tour of all our cathedrals. He was wearing flannel trousers and a tweed coat ; his face was pleasant and good, his enunciation clear and careful—an Anglophil, undoubtedly—and we might have been dealing with an English curate indulging in a day off. He thumbed his way through massive books, filled up forms, destroyed them and filled up others, asked us how we found New York, and said that if he got inside

the Radio City Music Hall he was satisfied with the architecture alone. The programme was a minor interest—just to sit in that great building was sufficient thrill for his five shilling entrance fee. We then began to take some exercise, he taking the lead and I following. We dashed out of the door, flung ourselves across the marble hall, squashed into an elevator, shot up a flight of stairs, sprinted along a marble corridor to a pigeon hole through which the agent consulted with a keen, dignified man whom he addressed as “Ed”.

“Ed” turned out to be a nuisance. “Ed” knew too much altogether. “Ed” studied more forms and larger reference books gravely while the agent informed me that this was an unfortunate moment for my affairs. A week ago it would have been easy, but there had been a “clean up” recently, and now everyone was afraid of not proceeding by the strict letter of the law. We also paid another five dollars.

As we executed a number of these journeys I saw a good deal of New York in the shape of the handsome Customs House, its lofty halls and piles of marble, and finally the broker showed me into a magnificent inner sanctum. An important-looking official—only a little less than the President, surely—was sitting in state at a handsome desk far away at the end of the room. He received a curt nod from my guide, and we then examined the heavy panelling and the rich carving—to show me, I suppose, the sort of thing the Customs did with my dollars. But I would have been quite content had they worked in an office instead of a Renaissance palace turned picture gallery. After four hours of this sort of thing I was released for the day—but not the puppets. They were still in the grip of the Customs, but would sure be released the next day if I appeared right early.

It was then, as we walked away from the Customs House

at the very bottom of Manhattan Island, that we were seized with the bright idea of walking back to the Wellington Hotel at 55th Street. By this means we expected to see quite a lot of the city, how much we did not realise until after an hour's walking on the fourteen miles long Broadway we discovered that we were still a long way from the hotel, and not far on with the exploration of Broadway. But we had seen something—the older New York growing a little shabby, quantities of working people not too flourishing to look at, and two little processions of strike pickets demonstrating on the pavement outside their shops in which sit-down strikes were in progress. One of these, an awful file of a dozen blind workers, advertising their strike with placards, and, with their dreadful, sickly bodies and blind eyes advertising the cruelty of a society that could expect them to work at all. This was not the gay Broadway we had expected, not the Great White Way of the theatre world. There was nothing entertaining or amusing in it at all.

After this experience we were entertained restfully in a private house of an older regime, and caught a brief impression of the staid elegance and taste of the past, of beautiful chairs and tables, of delightful china, and portraits by American artists on the walls. But even here, from the point of view of tourist amusement, we were disturbed by the tale of a recent battle with gunmen in the street, and how the press of sightseers had been so great that the operations of the police had been held up for five hours, and when what was left of the criminals were arrested, the car, in which they were placed, was nearly overturned by the crowd.

And I was disturbed by the efficient but sinister control of the photographers who came to the hotel with a portable

studio. A few moments before the time arranged for the interview the office rang up to know if their operators had arrived, and, if not, would they ring up the office as soon as they did arrive? And as the artists were disappearing through the swing doors another call inquired at what time, exactly, had they left? The telephone is a wonderful convenience to some people. It is a common occurrence in the States, when you unsuspectingly answer the telephone ring, to have a quick-fire advertisement of something or other shot into your ear.

But in the evening we decided to be real tourists and enjoy what was provided for us. Radio City Music Hall, the World's Largest Amusement House, the Show Place of the Nation, the Record Auditorium of Six Thousand Seats, and the Monster, Lavish Stage Presentation was calling to us—and all other hicks. That seemed the proper thing to do. The spider's web was set for us—everything of the largest.

In this pious mood we walked out into the exciting streets, into the maelstrom of pedestrians on the sidewalks, the quantities of yellow taxis and private cars all moving briskly under the glittering panoply of neon lights, for New York is not content with the stars at a distance, but has brought the constellations down into the city, and you walk in a world of myriads of starry points of light, of a riot of moons and suns, and colossal bars of strip lighting. The buildings disappear and you walk within a structure of lights. In the most highly illuminated quarter of Broadway the crowd is as thick as a country fair. The whole thing is, indeed, the apotheosis of country fair ideology.

It was in a quieter street that we presently found ourselves staring at a placard attached to an old-fashioned building that was distinguished by having no neon strip-lights. A

concert by the New York Symphony Orchestra was advertised and a concerto with Iturbi as pianist was to be played. After disturbing days of interviews and Jiffy Breakfasts there was a strong appeal in the idea of listening to real music. We clutched at this shabby-looking oasis, realising how thirsty we were for real rest and intelligent refreshment. Radio City Music Hall would flash all its gaudy lights and clamour in vain. In a moment our hospitable friend had bought some tickets, we climbed some old, winding stairs, bare of cinema magnificence, and we took our seats among a normal audience of musical-looking amateurs, kind, intelligent men, serious young women, and grey distinguished-looking spinsters. We had seen them all before, in London, in Manchester, anywhere where there is music, and when the old brown fiddles and aged 'cellos began to sing out the joyous rhythms of Haydn we knew we had done the right thing, and that we could not have honoured New York more than by spending our first evening in the old Carnegie Hall, listening to the distinguished New York Symphony Orchestra performing miracles on the shabby old fiddles. From the classics we progressed to modern Russian music, and finished with William Walton's *Façade*. During the latter the audience laughed freely in the right places, enjoying the jokes in those humorous pieces.

"I like that," said the man in front of us. "I like that. He's a jolly fellow, you know, that Englishman—he's got some fun!"

That Englishman! Yes, we were aliens, and coming out of the hall we found a deluge of American rain and the audience skipping along in search of cars and taxis with newspapers held cleverly over their heads, for nobody but an alien Englishman would think of carrying an umbrella. In the States it is the Englishman's insignia—an umbrella,

or a dirty rain-coat, or both. It has been said that the American has his car—the Englishman his umbrella.

“There has been a set-back,” said the agent gloomily. It was the third visit to the Customs and in the evening the puppets were to give their first performance at the Central Library.

“Your things ought to be at the Appraisers, but they are still on the quay. I don’t know if we can get them to-day.”

“But I must have them to-day. There will be an audience waiting for me to-night—and what does all this New York exist for? To harass a modest puppet-showman?”

“Well, my man is just going to see what he can do.”

“Is there anything I can do if I go with him?”

“There’s just a chance that another five dollars would procure a special delivery.”

Not having come to grips with the American currency I was in the happy condition of feeling that five dollars was about the same as five shillings, and in a draughty, sinister shed the five dollars were deposited in a palm, and we withdrew to the Appraisers to await the result. My boxes might come, and they might not, and we just waited.

We waited in a subterranean corridor where a lot of life went on around us. An endless succession of men went to and fro, coming in and going out of mysterious doors, disappearing round corners and emerging from elevators. They all seemed remarkably happy. They smiled and were well fed, and stopped to greet each other, and a great many cigars changed hands.

“’Allo, Ed!”

“’Allo, Al; you got them bills?”

“Yeah! I gotta a whole bunch!”

Then the cigar was produced from the pocket and handed over.

"Thanks a lot," and Ed and Al moved on their way, in the gliding rhythm of the New York workers, an even, easy rhythm, quite different from the nervous intensity of the London business man. Many were smoking large cigars, and if not smoking there was usually one cigar at least tucked into the upper left-hand waistcoat pocket. And a few were chewing gum, but the real passionate, vigorous chewer was very rare, and there were no vessels for the purpose of cuspidation.

These sociological studies were cut short by the arrival of the puppets. There were more interviews, elevations, the passing of quarters, and a painful hide-and-seek game between the puppets, the customs examiner and the third and fourth floors of the warehouse, but everything came together in the end, a dominating appraiser, the agent, porters, the puppets and myself unlocking the box.

"Have you a detailed list of the contents?"

"No!" I looked at the collection of puppets, properties and costumes and gadgets in despair.

"There must be a detailed list," pressed the appraiser, and I looked at the ridiculously small puppet garments, the minute gloves much the worse for wear, the battered little hats, the splintered wooden properties, the ingenious gadgets for my private use which were beyond all description, and began to seethe with annoyance at the preposterous idea of putting them down, one by one, in an official declaration. I am afraid it was one of those moments when I chose to deliver a small but pithy harangue against the naivete of a commercial age which imagines itself to be practical.

"Well, I think we can soon manage a list," said the appraiser with the ghost of a smile. "Just show me the main

objects," and he quietly set to work to describe this ridiculous puppet company and their effects. In a few minutes I found myself to be in possession of :

One stout, middle-aged blonde.

One young blonde in green dress.

One pale minister with upturned eyes.

One square-headed pugilist with button eyes, etc.

The appraiser held the pugilist thoughtfully in his hand. "How do these things work?" he inquired casually. It was an innocent question for him, but it loosed in me a professional, assertive activity, and in a few moments the warehouse was ringing with the resounding blows of "one square-headed pugilist with button eyes", and official operations were suspended while the grinning porters, the agent and the appraiser watched a battle royal, and "one young blonde in green dress" cavort with "one pierrot with black head". It was the puppets' first appearance in America, and I count it an entire success, for in half-an-hour the things were in a taxi and Johnson Parker—you are always introduced to your taxi driver in New York—was driving me up Manhattan to the Central Library on Fifth Avenue just in time to set the theatre for the first official performance.

This first performance was an anxiety in itself ; setting up the theatre and adjusting the lighting to American fittings in a hurry was another, and added to these apprehensions were all the passing impressions of the New York scene. We were setting the theatre in the children's room, a large, bright room with handsome chairs and tables, and book-cases full of bright and attractive books—books that were crying out to us to be examined. Four or five very good-looking, equally bright and attractive young ladies, originat-

ing from several nationalities so that they could deal with the international character of the clients, moved around in that easy *perpetuo moto* of the New York worker, and every time they glided in our vicinity it was for a purpose. Had we everything we wanted? Could they be of any assistance? Did we want any tools? Had we seen the specially arranged exhibition of English toy theatres?

That question was too much for us, and we tore ourselves away from our desperate work to look at the pretty "penny plain, tuppence coloured" theatres that had been set up on the bookcases and illuminated with footlights which the young visitors to the library could switch on and off for themselves. There was the *Miller and His Men* and all the rest of them, and those charming pull-out paper peep-shows into which you peer down limitless perspectives of cathedrals and forest glades. We were proud to think that our puppets had inspired this exhibition, and full of admiration for the clever librarians who had brought out these ravishing little miracles of Victorian work, these playthings of Victorian children, to stand beneath the great towers of modern New York.

Would I autograph the library's copies of my books, which they had down to the meanest pamphlet, and we must sign the Visitors' Book. Tony Sarg, the leading puppeteer of America, had been there we saw, and Van der Loon had entertained the children at a Christmas Party there with his fiddle, and had actually made a drawing for each child to take away. And one European potentate had managed to cover two complete pages with her signature, to the exclusion of any commoner's that might have intruded.

Would we like some tea? And here it was, the hot water in cartons, the tea in cotton infusing bags, and cartons to infuse it in. The water was not boiling, but you get used

to that in America, which is not a tea, but a coffee country. Those little bags of tea! The bag is too small to allow the leaves to swell, and the unboiling water cannot possibly draw out the desirable and heady poisons in the tea. No wonder that Liptons in the instructions printed on their packets of tea underline the emphatic words—"furiously boiling water". It means that a dreadful lot of tea is wasted in this manner, but America is not interested in tea, and why on earth should she be with such good coffee and all that vast range of iced drinks.

With all these fascinating interpolations it was with extreme difficulty that we got the theatre ready, and ourselves away in time to be dined at the Town Hall Club. We had not had time to imagine anything about the Club, and it was a blow to us, and must have been still more so to our hostesses, when we arrived breathless, unwashed and undressed in that pillared hall with the hushed elegance and the muted lights. We dined well on the prolific and varied American menu, and were so well entertained that a sudden and rapid flight was necessitated to get us back to the show on time. With visions of flashing lights, of the crashing elevated railway, and impossibly tall towers of lighted windows still reeling in my brain, I found myself before the audience, some hundreds of children and librarians drawn from every section of the city. It was one more crashing New Yorkism, for I was looking into hundreds of shining, eager eyes, framed by features and complexions from every country in the world.

The performance was a "wow", due entirely to the quick intelligence of the audience I am sure, but I was relieved to find that my puppets could make themselves understood in this multiple foreign country. And they were understood in their fullest significance—that they lived

naturally and with verve within the narrow limits of their own simple puppet existence. When the lights went up there was a long drawn "Oh!" of regret from the children.

They rushed at the theatre to thank us, to congratulate, and to examine the "doings", which they could do intelligently as American children have been well educated in the matter of puppet-shows and are very familiar with them.

"I'm in this business, too," said a small voice in the region of my waistcoat.

I looked down to find two shining eyes belonging to a lad of about ten. Lower down, still nearer the floor, was another pair of eyes.

"And he's my assistant." The elder lad indicated with a nod this mite of about six. "We present fairy tales, Aladdin—Cinderella. You got any more productions? We use string puppets. I gotta four foot stage, scenery and lights."

Meanwhile Winifred was being severely interrogated on her side by a group of vivid girls.

"Say! you got no scenery? Huh! no scenery!" and one of the girls walked away apparently disgusted.

"Geel! that was swell. I guess I could have looked at that all night!"

A large-eyed Negro girl approached her, and said, "I do puppets."

"Do you? And do you make them and dress them yourself?"

"Yeah, I do *The Sleeping Beauty*, and I dress them in red velvet."

"I got a theatre," cried another small boy. "But I got real theatre lights you can switch on and off, and put on a coloured spot."

In spite of these suggestions of superiority we concluded

that the show had been a success. The professional puppeteers in the audience were satisfied, and there was an emotional moment behind the scenes when Kunze and I embraced each other with continental abandon and enthusiasm. It was a great relief to get this first performance carried out—to have cleared the Customs and to have kept the first engagement on the “skedule”. We walked home through the fantastic lighting of Broadway, the gaudy riot of advertising matching our spirits, and we felt that we had really arrived in New York at last—if not in the United States.

There was no time for relaxation. In the morning we knocked off a Jiffy Breakfast like old hands and shifted the theatre to Wanamakers’ large store on Broadway, where we were to give two performances during the day. So! the puppets had come to Broadway—well, it was Broadway, if not quite in the theatre zone—and it will not be long before the puppets are ousting the actors from the theatres round 50th Street.

Already we had begun to notice the attitude to portorage in the United States. At the store the door-keeper was not interested in us, and dismissed us hurriedly to the loading platforms in the rear. In England, I think, he would have scented the possibility of a tip in handling an unusual job, but not in New York—handling baggage does not come naturally to the white man. Eventually a kind individual took pity on us, and with his help we carried the baggage over acres of floor space, through department after department, through carpets, furniture, art, lingerie, books, and stationery until, between the shoes and the boys’ knicker suit section, we came to the auditorium. Arrived there, everything became exceedingly snappy. Carpenters, upholsterers and electricians pushed their way competently, and in the New York glide, through the job of setting the

theatre. It was necessary to have a microphone for amplification, and while I was still trying to invent methods of negotiating this innovation to the performance the auditorium became completely full, and we were launched on the first performance.

By this time my consciousness was at a minimum. If I have any preference for an audience it would be for two or three hundred elderly, scholarly people, who feel that to see a puppet-show is to indulge in an orgy of frivolity—and—undoubtedly if there is any condition I have a strong prejudice against, it is to be wedged between the shoes and knicker suits, and to play through a microphone that continually hits me on the nose as I move to and fro to manipulate the puppets. The atmosphere was at the Gates of Hell for an Englishman, and rarely have I spent a more uncomfortable or exhausting hour.

A repetition an hour or so later seemed impossible, but the management refreshed us nobly with lunch, and, for the second time, shut up in my little tropical stage, I wagged the unseen puppets, and through all the necessary movements attempted to focus my voice on the intruding microphone. All dispersed and enervated by two performances in tropical heat I staggered out to autograph books and to give a glad-eye to interested purchasers. I like to autograph books. The craving for a personal link between author and reader is entirely good. But I can see the day coming when an autograph or a simple inscription will not be enough. It will be necessary for authors to write out a complete title page. The movement will grow and he will have to provide a written prologue and epilogue, and finally we shall get back to the manuscript book complete.

In the middle of this autographing a telephone call came through for me. Wading through the book and boot and

shoe clients I came to the telephone—on a haberdashery counter if I remember. At all events I was very confused, and listened in a dream to an energetic, buoyant voice that said it was issuing an editorial on my puppet performance, and would I listen to it and approve before it went to press. I listened, and it sounded very erudite and intelligent until it came to the part where my performance was instanced as “creating a furore in a New York store!” And then I went all haywire. In all that crazy confusion of temperature and bustle that little poem, which did not quite scan, became the only reality. It sang in my head through the rest of the conversation, urging me to be proud, to burst with laughter, and to try to disentangle the weak scansion. No wonder, when we returned to the hotel, I was surprised to find from a special messenger that I had agreed to purchase fifty copies of the magazine containing the editorial. I have to say, with gratitude, that I was graciously relieved of that responsibility.

That was the end of New York, for the time being, and very nearly the end of us. In a dream, propelled by some unseen power, we packed, checked out of the hotel, and departed with the assistance of a well-groomed and drilled staff that worked with the impersonal and inexorable efficiency of a machine. A fitful stormy sun burst over the great buildings with a Babylonish splendour, and it was obvious that New York was most satisfactorily and magnificently New York. It always came up to one's expectations, in fact, it had gone a good deal beyond our most daring conception; it had completely overwhelmed and captivated us.

“Leave it to us—we will take care of it.”

I sighed with content at the comforting phrase that we were to hear so often in America. “We will take care of it,” and the big baggage was handed over and checked through

to its destination without any further trouble on our part. Sleepwalking through a large bright station, surrounded by bookstalls, milk bars, restaurants, tobacco, and information bureaus we were deposited by red-capped Negro porters in an astonishingly long and high Pullman car. It was possibly a nightmare, but we seemed to slip back into an old picture of an America of the past. The dining-car was full of vacationists going to Atlantic City, the women over-dressed far beyond any fashions, the men all loud laughter and boyish health, all drinking strange coloured liquids from odd-shaped bottles and glasses that tinkled with lumps of ice. They were actually hilarious, bursting with happiness on their way to Atlantic City. I had never seen such unaffected beanfeasting since a far-away boyhood in the English provinces.

We left the train soon after Philadelphia, and the confusion turned to a quiet darkness, to driving in a car under trees to a white painted wooden house—and to sleep in a normal bed in a normal room after three weeks of ship and hotel life.

III

THIS IS SUSAN DEWEES' CHAPTER

IT all looked like an English bedroom, but not quite. For instance, I was conscious of a waft of warm air caressing my left cheek now and then, and looking down nervously over the edge of the bed I saw an open grill let into the bedroom floor. *Open—Shut* it pronounced on opposite sides, and I immediately gathered that this was the entrance of the centrally heated air coming from the basement.

The bedstead was not quite English ; it had upstanding little spires, elegantly turned from what looked like walnut wood. It was not of this age at all, obviously an antique—eighteenth century, early nineteenth—I could not say, but to find oneself in an antique American bed, flanked by an antique chest of drawers, was to be flung immediately into the bright morning of the world, to be among the eager pioneers, those fortunate people who stepped out of the mouldy, decrepit Old World into the New World. A monstrous load was lifted from my mind. Instead of the weary world of newspapers, social questions, art, the imminence of a fantastic and unwanted war, and all the intricate mass of pretentious nonsense that passes for life in Europe, I began to think in terms of real human life, of farming and gardening, of wood-chopping, of cooking in a spacious kitchen before an open fire, of amateurish clothing in plain materials, of the virgin forest not far away, and Indians—a human life that sported intimately with the elements, enfolded within the bosom of Nature instead of in the skinny arms of a

Municipal Council and arid financial schemings. It was delightful, and I sank back into the bed to become quite unconscious of the fool I was making of myself.

And yet, there it was again. A bright, clear sun was streaming into the room in a thoroughly uncivilised way, and on the bare vines of the wistaria outside the window two large, fierce blue birds were searching for insects. I rubbed my eyes and looked again. Winifred was asleep so I know I must have been awake. They must be blue jays—they were blue jays—and I could not remember hearing of blue jays since the days of reading Mark Twain—more antiques, for modern American writers do not write about blue jays. And then there were the books—the wall behind the bed was all books, and here and there a title stood out—*Civil War. Life of Washington. Emerson. Lowell. Abraham Lincoln.* Not a sign of anything more recent to be seen!

Only the arrival of a very modern breakfast reassured me; but, aching with modern times in the shape of four wild days in New York, and sticking to the "skedule", my mind artfully refused to come entirely into the present. For the time being, apart from the breakfast, I had had enough of it.

Presently Winifred began to laugh at something she was reading in an ancient-looking book.

"Listen to this," she said. "It's by an old Swedish authoress, Frederika Bremer, who came here in eighteen fifty-six and wrote this book about it. Just listen."

"It is also requisite that I should really be released bodily from my friends of the Astor and New York, who otherwise would have made an end of me in the beginning. I was so weary of that first day's labour in social life, which lasted till long after midnight, and was so much in need of rest and sleep, that I did not believe it possible for me to set

off from New York at five o'clock the next morning. . . . My happiest hours here are those which I spend alone in the forenoon, in my own room, with American books, and those passed in the evening with my host and hostess, sitting in the little darkened parlour with book-cases and busts around us.' "

That was eighty years ago, and they are still at it. It is an historical and proverbial fact, to be swept off your feet when landing in New York, and I am convinced because of it that New York is the correct place to land, and nothing could be more delightful than these overwhelming and hospitable attentions. But, for my part, I was glad they were over. I did not regret them, but to awake in Haverford, a suburb of Philadelphia, in an old bed with blue jays blazing in the sun on the window sill, was exceedingly restful.

Getting up and looking out of the windows was to look into suburban America, to some small gardens with flowers and lawns, quantities of large trees—hardly budding yet—and to the surrounding detached houses, all white with emerald green window frames and doors. It all looked very new and neat, and in the lovely day very attractive ; it was a Garden City without a trace of self-consciousness or artiness.

Going downstairs was to discover that the rooms led into each other without the assistance of doors so that the hot air, that issued from the floor grills, could circulate all over the house. This simple observation meant a lot to me ; it explained those spacious interiors of American houses which had puzzled me at the cinema, and which gave such a very different sensation from our own boxed-up houses.

Feeling distinctly feverish and dried up, with a parched throat and the sensation of being suffocated by the heated air from which there was no escape, I opened a door and

went into the garden. The day was certainly not so warm as it looked ; the sun was hot and the central heating was hot, but there was a queer cool breeze that seemed to have an independent existence, and coming back into the house I discovered that it was a mistake to leave the door open. In fact everything was unfamiliar, and in leaving the door open, the reduced temperature had operated on the thermostat hanging on the wall, which, in its turn had operated on the furnace in the basement and had set it roaring like some buried, disgruntled giant.

So we sat down in the sitting-room before we dislocated any unknown mechanical devices, and picked up a huge bundle of newspapers. We knew our hostess was interested in the trends of society, but we could not help thinking that this was an excessive zeal, and that to read all these slightly varied accounts of the same skeleton of news was to court a vacation in a Mental Home.

But what was this? *New York Times*—Section One. *New York Times*—Section Two—Three—Four. . . . Good gracious! It was all one paper! Thirteen sections and two hundred and twelve pages. It weighed prodigiously, and taking it to the kitchen scales we found that there was all but three pounds of it. Staggering back to our chairs we began an investigation, and it was soon apparent that being in separate sections it was possible to split the journal for various members of the household without impairing that precious sense of having the whole paper in your hands. In fact, you cannot split an English paper with impunity ; once parted the sheets never come together again neatly or in the right order—the thing becomes a beastly bundle. But there is nothing else to do but split the American Sunday paper, and in self-defence you serve it round the family circle. Winifred took the Book Section ; the general

news, "All The News That's Fit to Print," went to another, and I prowled among the remaining eleven sections, and read here and there quite happily until I realised that I was not always understanding what I read.

The financial news would have been incomprehensible to me anywhere; the Dress Section was not appealing, but the Social Section was entrancing with photographs of quantities of brides, and the descriptive paragraphs brought out the social importance of American University life. Here is a portrait of, let us say, Miss Edith Shanahan, a proud, full-faced beauty, who is engaged to a Mr. Pogue Guttentag, Jr., and the one may be an alumna of Vassar, and the other, perhaps, a graduate of the Hill school, Pottstown, Pa., who also attended the Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn. Brides! Brides! Brides! Such a quantity of them, sitting up, looking at you proudly, but, curiously, hardly a bridegroom to be seen!

The Real Estate Section interested me, having met real estate casually in American novels when it had always appeared to be more fantastic than real. But here it was in all its convincing particulars. You read of a Bronx deal, the sale of a six-storey apartment house, involving \$1,000,000. Mildred Blahun purchases a twelve-room house in the Bowery. Jan McCurdy has dealt with Hans Holz through Heuman and Tencoorn, Inc., brokers, and after half a column of this sort of thing the international nomenclature of New Yorkers begins to impress itself.

The Travel Section was exasperating with its wealth of opportunities. Here were advertised Sea Coasts with palms, and Mountains in the clouds; Forests and National Parks with deer and bear to hunt; Sunny cruises, trailer tours, luxury hotels, ranches and summer camps in the backwoods, and pictures of the most staggering and expansive scenes,

all thousands of miles away, but all in America and to be reached by road, by airplane or by fascinating Pullmans.

Art, literature and music had the most excellent attention, but art, in the guise of quantities of comic strips which were neither art nor comic, were disappointing. Sport had an entire section with a galaxy of pictures of rowing, sailing, motor-boating, boxing, golf, running—every possible sporting activity, including, naturally, the Great Ball Game :

“With two down in the eighth singles by Haas and Shoffner and Hank’s double chased in two more, and chased Fletcher, Sewell checked the enemy. . . .

“Suddenly Trosky dashed for the plate and came close to making it, but Jo-Jo retired the next eleven men to face him before going out for a pinch-hitter and Jim treated the next three likewise.”

Yes, I was undoubtedly in America and considerably out of my depth by this time. I had a lot to learn, and I quite agreed with the conclusions of an American minister but newly returned from England.

“Englishmen”, he had said, “still have a false idea of life in the United States. The news reels when depicting life here show freak happenings or scenic views of our natural wonders, and as a result many over there feel that our life is still quite countryfied with cowboys very much in evidence. And, as for our city existence, that we live in constant peril of gangsters.”

I was glad to come across that paragraph because I had always suspected that all the people of the United States could not possibly live on tip-toe all the time, and that only the high peaks of news and sensations came to us. It is a serious fault of much American journalism, indeed of all journalism, this effort to be sensational. When we considered sending copies of the illustrated paper *Life* to

England, we decided that its intense sensationalism was not quite true, that its pictures, in fact, did not give a good picture of America. What *Life* does, it does superlatively well in detail, but the perpetual pictures of dead bodies and eccentric parties would give a false impression to a reader who did not know the States, and we did not send the paper to England. It is only necessary to add that we had gathered the impression that Americans were in danger of entertaining equally false impressions of the English. There was always the suspicion that you were being regarded as a scion of a noble family, and that there was no conceivable reason why you should not be on intimate terms with *Lord* Lipton and *Sir* Baldwin.

It was this very question that made us stare at this normal little house in Haverford. We wanted to see the beds, the tables and chairs, and the meals of the average citizen.

From the paper we went into lunch, to eat an unsensational meal with the addition of a side dish of cold slaw, milk to drink, and the latest thing in raspberries, this fruit having travelled naked, so to speak, from the South or West in refrigerators, and kept in refrigerators in store and home until needed. What was remarkable was the Negro maid and the rate at which she operated. Up to that moment I would have thought it impossible to take so much time in picking up a plate, and when every plate was picked up and removed to the kitchen singly, and fresh plates brought, also one by one, in the same slow, grave manner, another false impression that all Americans are quick lunchers was dispelled. We enjoyed the reflective Negro maid immensely; she might have been singing to herself all the time *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen*. If the antique furniture called up visions of pioneers, the slow-moving Negress reminded us of the dreamy, glamorous South.

It was with the idea of making further investigations into the domestic economy of an American household that we began to show some zeal in helping to clear up the lunch.

"Put the butter and milk in the refrigerator."

I approached the enormous, white enamel sarcophagus and gingerly pushed a lever that looked like a handle. The door immediately seemed alive ; it pushed into my stomach, clicked, and an interior light was switched on in the icy cavern ; at the same time a whirring noise was set up somewhere in the interior, and, depositing the butter in a sort of wire cage, I hastily closed the door with a guilty feeling that something had gone wrong. It was only the electric mechanism automatically set in motion by the rise of temperature.

The rest of the kitchen looked normal enough, except that it was very bright and new, and rather like one of those impossible kitchens you see in an Ideal Home exhibition, as if you ordered a new kitchen once a week with the groceries. But for all its brightness, as Winifred and I washed the dishes, we had a feeling that the American kitchen was haunted. Mysterious clicks and whirring sounds came upon us unawares. I nearly dropped a cup in turning round sharply to locate the noise in the corner, only to find myself staring at an entirely stupid and unperturbed water boiler. Then I had to whip round the other way as the refrigerator clicked again and ceased its whirring noise. Then to my side the lid of a refuse bin began leaping up and down without signs of material aid, until I realised that a foot was operating the lid by means of a treadle. There was another clatter and conk on the table and a wretched piece of toast leapt into the air out of an electric toaster, just like a fish leaping for a fly. All very amusing, no doubt, but, coming from the Old Country, one ought to be warned of these things.

There had been similar shocks from mechanical devices in New York—particularly from doors. In the Pennsylvania station the doors had opened politely as we approached them, not with springs under the mat, but by the trick of breaking an invisible “ ray ” at the approach. Other doors opened just as you put out a hand, with the result that you would dive clumsily into a restaurant and probably come to rest on the bosom of the head waiter. Other doors squirmed and wriggled and folded themselves away as if horribly alive, and before these you were inclined to stop with fright and not get going again until the energetic creature began to close itself. On the other hand you could walk into an elevator and stand, wondering why the thing did not start, until the door would glide noiselessly away and you found that without jerks, nauseous uplift or any sensation of motion you had been expressed up to the fiftieth floor. In the Fifth Avenue “ buses ” the conductor presents a pistol at your fluttering breast. It is only a triggered receptacle for the fare—and, am I dreaming—but I seem to remember one that dropped out the change.

After lunch—and I hardly knew what to expect on an American Sunday afternoon—we motored through the country to make a visit, and we found ourselves travelling through the Pennsylvania fields, some of the oldest settled land in America, and had we been suddenly dropped there it would have been difficult to distinguish it from much English country. It was pretty, rolling farm country of meadows and ploughland divided by stone walls, with a clear stream here and there and flowers in the grass. It was the houses that drove England from your mind—they were so neat, many built of wood and some, solidly, of grey stone, but they stood up starkly, good and plain, with none of the rambling or decrepit picturesqueness of the English country-

side. And when we came to a peach orchard, just budding into a deep pink, it was no longer England at all.

We turned into a drive and passed under some graceful trees scattered over a small park before a large stone house. This seemed to us more or less hallowed ground, for it had been one of the early settlements and incorporated in this country residence you could see the original small farmhouse. An enormous bell hung outside the kitchen door had called the labourers to meals ; the sunk ice house was still there, and in the fields was an immense timbered barn, built on the hillside so that roads could run into it on three different levels to its three floors. It was delightful, and we walked into the large high rooms, savouring the elegance of the Pennsylvania farmer of the past. The large hall housed an immense grandfather clock, made by Bailey, Banks and Biddle, of Philadelphia, I am sure—they seem to have made all the clocks in these parts—and fine pieces of furniture were in all the rooms. We drank a warm, fruity wine made from grapes grown on the farm, and what gave the house an unmistakable American character was the stack of bows and arrows and canoe paddles in a corner of the hall. It was delightful, and we walked through the farm, by meadows and apple orchards, peach orchards, and grape vines to a charming piece of woodland where we found the white blood root flowers and the delicate blue hepatica.

Thus our American education advanced pleasantly, and we began to think that with New York, a Philadelphia suburb, and this trip into the beautiful green country of Pennsylvania we were pretty well on with our discovery of America—but there was more to come.

IV

THE PUPPETS GO TO COLLEGE

WE rolled away from Walnut Avenue, Haverford, in a large shining car, gliding through the well-ordered and respectable Pennsylvania country, that would have been like the Berkshire countryside if it had not been furnished with the American wooden and plain stone houses, with the colonial porches and pillars. And we passed through villages that were built of separate, brightly painted wooden houses, which, if they were not so old and historic, looked very pleasant and drier and more hygienic to live in than many of our unrepaired antiques.

But my mind was too much occupied to study the passing scene, for it seemed to me that we were advancing towards a perilous adventure. These bold and reckless Americans at Swarthmore College had invited us, not only to give a puppet performance, which they had never seen, but also to attach ourselves to the faculty for ten days and assist with the study of English literature and give some critical attention to the students of creative writing. That was all very well as far as the puppets were concerned, but I felt rather diffident as regards the literary criticism. I pondered this while we were gliding towards Swarthmore, and I had just come to the uncomfortable decision that I was incapable of it when we drew up within the precincts of the college, walked under a deep arch and found ourselves in a delightful green quadrangle surrounded by greystone Cotswold cottages. Entering one of the cottages by a heavy oaken door we deposited

our bags in our home for the next ten days, a long Cotswold bedroom with low sloping roof and dormer windows all complete. We looked down into the quadrangle and out to the rising green campus where the many handsome buildings stood among the trees.

Swarthmore College, co-educational, was originally founded by the Society of Friends ; there is still a Meeting House within the campus, but although the Quaker influence has waned the college has great sincerity of purpose and a very high reputation for scholarship. Its distinguished President, Dr. Aydelotte, is an old Oxford scholar, and he has created a college that draws more earnest students than can be accommodated from all over the United States. When the whole world is in such a mess I hardly dare speak of the systems of education that have produced it, but at Swarthmore College scholarship comes before sport, and you can dismiss from your mind visions of padded footballers uniting in concerted war cries. It has a beautiful setting ; the Cotswold cottages, the older and the modern halls, and all the separate houses among the trees range pleasantly over the green hill, which is the campus, and gather round the very handsome Gothic hall and tower in the high centre. It is a college in the country, a very civilised country, with a railway station on one corner of the campus, and a small town with its restaurant furnished with colonial antiques, a book store—all the amenities, in fact, with the ubiquitous drug store richly stocked with light refreshments, journals, tobaccos, and all human needs, much as you would find in New York.

This literature business began almost unawares over coffee and cake in the professor's living room, a large, handsome room with a rocky hearth fireplace, Persian rugs and white paint, and comfortable chairs. Some seven or eight

young ladies and one man, in very summery costumes, carried on a pleasant and intelligent discussion, subtly guided by the professor, on the works of Conrad. They had all had more time in which to read Conrad than I had, and I contributed to the discussion the golden quality of silence. From this we went to dinner in college, to introductions, and to coffee at a brief after-dinner dance for the students.

We were interested to meet among the faculty Mr. Townsend Scudder, the author of *The Lonely Wayfaring Man*. One could not imagine a more appropriate thesis for American academic research than this account of Emerson in England and his personal relationships with the many English litterateurs of the period. Academic! Well, it is very erudite, but, more than that, it is a fascinating story and a work of art; the pictures of English life as Emerson saw them, particularly such studies as that of the great Manchester feast at which he presided, seemed to me very deep in imaginative understanding and alive with Victorian feeling.

After dinner we made an exodus under the trees and the bright stars to another professor's living room. Here students read and discussed their original stories and poems, and without any great difficulty we were able to apply method number one of literary criticism, because the work was very good and honest, and encouragement to write more seemed to be the only recipe for improvement. The majority of the students were women, and their prose work appeared to be under the influence of Katharine Mansfield; their poems had nothing to do with America, but were cleverly in line with the obscure puzzles behind which poets the world over now barricade themselves from a vulgar world.

We were impressed by the care with which the faculty studied their charges, all discussions being remarkably frank and free, and very minor or hesitating contributions listened to with respect and gently put into place. We were guests at a luncheon convened for the purpose of discussing what students should be admitted to honours studies, and it almost brought tears to my eyes. Here was a youth who had not come up to expectations, and several professors were for turning him down, but one of his instructors had detected signs of improvement in his recent work, and said so. This one small ray of hope was eagerly seized upon and discussed, with the result that the student was to be given a chance. Here again was a girl whose work had fallen below her normal standard.

"Oh, she's all right! I guess she's been having a swell time lately, that's all."

Another very conscientious girl consistently overworked herself and presented a problem.

"If she's admitted to honours classes she will make herself ill."

"She had better go slow for a bit, and take honours later."

"She's temperamentally incapable of going slow. If she isn't admitted to honours, she'll worry about it and make herself ill by trying to catch up."

"Hum! Seems she has got to have breakdowns anyway. Better admit her to the hard work to protect her from working too hard!"

And so the discussion went on, eagerly, frankly and with infinite consideration and thoughtful concern for the student involved, and what struck me as an afterthought was that each student was exceedingly well known by the faculty; there was no fumbling as to who was who. If the

faculty studied their charges, the students on their part evidently studied the faculty. One class had come to the President with complaints because a professor had prefaced his course with the diffident remark, "I am afraid I don't know much about this subject." This had scandalised the students; "On his own confession he doesn't know his subject." But the President knew better, and in a week or so the students had returned voluntarily to say that they had been mistaken and that they would like to keep their professor.

After being behind doors with the faculty it was a piquant interest to be taken off to visit the men's dormitories, and to drink some tea there in the evening. My conductor talked at speed, very entertainingly, of his artistic and dramatic interests, and entering the hall we looked over some live and interesting paintings on the walls.

"The college gets lots of gifts of pictures," he remarked. "The worst of it is the powers that be seem to think that it is a religious duty to hang them all. And we've got a lot of sculpture, too. But they had to be hidden in the cellars—not enough clothes on—so we can only see those through the chinks in the windows."

We went upstairs into a delightful study shared by three men and a spare bed, and it seemed the strongest point of the college to me that there were books, papers, pictures, gramophone records, suspenders and the like strewn over the bed, the floor and the desk in hopeless confusion. The study, in fact, exhibited all the proper riotous enthusiasm of youth, and would have been a pleasure to work in.

Entering another room, very bright, and decorated with those well-known reproductions of Gaguin and Cézanne, and in perfect order, I was introduced to some other very neat young men, and divesting ourselves of our jackets,

which were carefully hung on coat-hangers, we sat around and conversed about everything.

Art was to the fore, and we examined some surrealist productions of our host, such as a black tooth-brush, a shoe-horn and an ice cream carton mounted on a board, with a tennis ball dangling on a string from the mysterious confection. There were photographs of other similar and very effective creations, though what the effect was exactly it would be difficult to say. I thought at first, at sight of the Gaguins and Cézannes, that the students were hopelessly old-fashioned, but it was obvious that they were toying with the abstract and the significant, and would soon be beyond even that. As to music, they knew all about that. They had just come through a course and knew that what they had to look for in a symphony, for instance, were the wonderfully interwoven patterns, but the difficulty was they got so interested in the music that they forgot to look for the patterns! In fact, there were very few flies on these students, and they were well protected from imbibing a lot of ready-made "stooge" by a plentiful supply of the American sense of irony.

It was impossible to escape a catechism on the recent abdication, and although the company could handle great names easily and toss a bit of gossip about with any man, yet it was the theoretic background that interested them, and they had come to the conclusion that it was necessary for a state to have a figure-head, a unifying symbol free of all party interests. They were intensely interested in the modern scene; we had discovered that in the literature studies, where there was a tendency to relate literature to the social question, and to judge its merits upon how it applied and was useful to social developments. One student had been killed as a volunteer fighting for the Spanish

government, and in the tragedy of Spain many of them saw the last stand of democratic government.

It was while the tea was being brewed in a very large pot, and a jar of apple butter being opened to eat with the crackers, that a large muscular youth appeared in one of the doorways ; he was like the statues down in the cellar, for with only a scrap of loin cloth he had hardly enough clothes for our polite party. There were shouts of horror, and cries of " We have a guest ", which resulted in nothing more than an amiable grin on the face of the naked youth, who had only looked in to ask for some information. There was more cheerful uproar when another figure, coming in to see what the noise was about, filled an opposite door with a similar display of chest muscles and shapely legs. After this I demanded to be returned to the respectability of my own rooms, and was conducted across the campus to find them locked. I was just on the point of being initiated in an interesting method of entrance by way of a basement window when, most unfortunately, the janitor appeared.

After all these new experiences we suddenly realised that we had only been in the States exactly one week, and that we had been wafted on from one thing to another in a state of perfect enjoyment. The weather was so fine, approaching mid-summer heat to us, although only early in April ; the world was so dry and radiant with sun, and now the almond trees and daffodils were out on the Swarthmore campus, the maple trees were covered with green knobs, and the Japanese cherries with white buds. Here and there students would be sunning themselves on the grass, and they seemed to me very fortunate young people, with their great freedom, the friendly co-operation of their professors, and the beautiful, spring-nurtured campus in which to wander and " co-ed ".

In that radiant atmosphere "co-edding" seemed a good deal more important and appropriate than pedantry, and to use a college for the indispensable business of courtship and marriage suddenly presented itself as a positively Utopian reformation and very sound sense. Not that this activity was at all pronounced; but it was there, openly and delightfully, and no more than was natural.

We moved on from class-rooms to professors' living rooms, indulging in lectures on the poets, the English countryside, abstruse researches into methods of literary criticism, and to individual conferences with students and their interesting manuscripts. Now it was a lunch, and now a buffet supper, when we sat around with well-loaded plates on our knees and discussed everything—particularly all the biting, stinging, scratching, sucking, gnawing and pestiferous "bugs" we were likely to meet on our American travels, and those "bugs" that make American gardening so difficult and the use of spraying so necessary.

Compared with these adventures in literary criticisms the event of the puppet show seemed almost a matter of dull routine until we found ourselves setting up the little theatre in the Clothier Hall, a very handsome young Gothic cathedral large enough to seat an audience of about a thousand. And in the caretaker we encountered one of those old soldiers who, having risked his life, and assisted in the blasting to bits of a few simpletons on the other side, in defence of his country, had been forced to find a means of livelihood in an alien land. He was not in the least bitter as to his own fate, but he had lost his respect for soldiering and war.

"It's just wicked, that's what it is. And after what I've seen it does me good to see these young fellows here stand up and say in public that they won't have anything to do with war. I like to see them."

And he was a good worker lost to the Old Country. I have seen some halls in my time, but never one better kept than this, and, although we looked, we could not find a speck of dust anywhere. I wonder if it gives any idea of the relative standards of living between the United States and England if I mention that this caretaker was able to take his wife to England every two years. It seemed pretty good to me.

The hall filled up and our small actors took the scene, a little conscious of the lofty roof, and the large audience. But if their heads are small, their spirits are great, and they acquitted themselves sufficiently well to be invited for a second performance. But it is hard work shifting an audience of nearly a thousand with a few small hand-puppets in the American idea of a comfortable temperature.

The shining car moved us on again, this time to the house in the wood. We turned out of a Sussex lane, climbed over a sharp rise through the bushes, and there we were, practically in the Cotswolds, with grey stone houses and rocky roofs, and our friends' house perched on the edge of a descending wood and cosily enclosed by stone walls and gardens on three different levels. The whole district was residential, and yet from its own precincts one house could hardly see another and looked out, apparently, to endless wooded country. The architect had studied the Cotswolds and was reproducing those beautiful stone houses, adapting them to the Pennsylvania country for the residence of commuters from Philadelphia. The only sensible thing that William Penn planned for the city of Philadelphia was plenty of trees, and although the trees were there, ready made, the ugly cupidity of city folk soon cleared them out, and now Philadelphians of taste have to travel for their trees.

We entered the house, crossed a delightful white painted

and Persian rug-ish living room with a huge open hearth fire, and came out on a balcony among the branches of the wood that sloped away from the house down to a winding creek gleaming through the trees.

We sat on the sunny balcony drinking tea and eating cinnamon toast—that is buttered toast sprinkled delicately with powdered cinnamon and fine sugar. Mother Britannia! Why, after all these years, do we not have cinnamon toast on the British menu! Squirrels sported among the branches; a chipmunk skipped along a wall, and birds of various makes, including a scarlet cardinal bird, were busy all about us. I can tell you, at that moment, I saw no reason at all why one should not live in the United States.

“Libby! I say, Libby! Do you mean to say you have started tea wiv’out me!”

And so entered young America in the shape of Master Chris, addressing his mother by Christian name, an attractive, sensitive boy with a great sense of fun lurking in his intelligent face.

Miss Judy, his beautiful sister, followed gracefully and more calmly, inquired as to the whereabouts of “Teddy”, her father, and they were both soon tucking in to the cinnamon toast and the good cakes, performing, if I remember, religious rites with the sugar in their tea-cups, and also, listening closely to our Englishness, for now and then I caught a pair of eyes studying me intently. After the day at a very modern school they now practised a little self-education, the one with a perfectly frivolous story book, the other with a ghastly mess of leaflets, garnered through the magazine advertisements, which ranged from reasons why you should invest your capital in a certain township to extensive trips to China.

It was interesting to find our friends experimenting with

the same quality of life as similarly placed people in England. A beautiful, practical, and more or less country house, with some gardening, and with a good deal about house and garden designed for the benefit of the children's culture. Under the trees, among the squirrels and chipmunks, was a pretty wooden play-house for them ; upstairs, in their well-lighted bedrooms were rows of those artistic and instructive books published for the young, all the classics of America and Britain, nature books, craft books, and well-sugared educational works. The children, in fact, are thoroughly spoiled. Not satisfied with the existing scholastic possibilities the families of the district had decided to build themselves a school and stock it with their own choice of staff. They have built the school with their own hands, and, in spite of the activities of sixty or seventy children, it is still standing. It is a very modern, experimental school at which the children work to a programme of not working to a programme. When they arrive in the morning they think things over, indulge in a little discussion, and decide their work for the day. The work was obviously of a very good standard, but we were a little alarmed in the four and fives room where there was an orgy of brick-building, and the teachers were taking notes of the youngsters' behaviour, which would be severely analysed later, under quieter circumstances. And they enjoyed our puppet show, so much so that one child who was in extreme pain disguised the fact until the end of the show. It was then discovered that an immediate appendix operation was necessary, and the child removed hastily to the hospital.

For the adults there is, down the lane, the famous Hedge-row Theatre that carries a full repertory of intellectual plays. The theatre is an old mill, with weathered stone walls, standing in the woods, its only decoration a couple of roughly

carved wooden horses that rise thoughtfully from the brushwood about the entrance of the theatre.

Down by the creek is another abandoned mill in the woods which is a sort of community house, and it was here, in the depths of Pennsylvania, that for the first time in my life I danced English folk dances, or rather was pushed and pulled through the figures by these Americans, so expert in the art.

Cars are used for strictly practical purposes, for catching trains, for getting the children to school, or for shifting the whole family in the summer vacation away from the humid heat of Pennsylvania to the cooler atmosphere of the Connecticut hill-tops.

There is a season ticket for the symphony concerts in Philadelphia, where the famous Stokowski has fascinated a large support. It is, in fact, a life that works in the everyday world, refreshes itself in a cultured corner of its own, and seeks to carry that culture back to its mundane tasks.

IN PHILADELPHIA

WE had little time in which to see Philadelphia. A large shining car, as usual, brought us in by way of Ardmore and through, probably, the richest suburban township in the world, by numbers of bright, luxurious houses with much white paint and green shutters, fanciful, gay houses with rocky roofs and intricate with balconies and verandahs pillars and porches, with gardens, which, at the moment were overflowing with masses of a bright yellow shrub. We passed through the large Fairmount Park, where the peach trees were just bursting into flower, and from there we could see the city, a Babylonish sky-line of the mighty towers, all trying to outstrip each other, and rising hugely from the natural world.

We first investigated the splendid shops, and impelled by the rising temperature, I bought a pair of cotton trousers for six shillings, and we then attacked one of the mountainous buildings, the tallest in the city.

We walked into a staggering hall of black and silver, so shimmering with concealed lights that it was impossible to gauge where walls and ceiling began and ended. It was the last word in smartness, but to me was just a horrible and revolting production of artificial light, air, and building material, a terrifying rectangular mausoleum in which all human sense came to a standstill. A smooth lift expressed us to the nineteenth floor, moving with scarcely any perception of movement, and with only a short nauseous quiver as

it stopped. A second lift carried us up further floors, and turned us out silently into another weird tomb of grey marble illuminated by six silent moons of light—a naked, horrid chamber with a chromium steel staircase in a corner that looked as if it led to a public lethal chamber—a completely de-humanised cell, an awful example of what “scientific” mechanics have in store for us. Happily the metal stair, leading by glass screens threaded with wire, took us out to a glass chamber on the roof, and we could see the real world once more, a vast acreage of a hazy, red Philadelphia stretching out below us.

At what seemed about a stone's throw across the air was the thirty-foot statue of William Penn on the City Hall, standing aloof above the city he had founded, and eternally wondering, I imagine, why it had not turned out quite as he expected. He had designed a green country town, with separate buildings among the trees and parks, but we could see very little in the way of separate houses, and the only parks were car-parks. The straight roads streaked away through the mass of houses until they disappeared in a vanishing point, or were lost in the wide Delaware river that we could see two or three miles away. Immediately below us was the old ruddy-red Philadelphia, with the church built by the original Swedish settlers only a little more than two hundred years ago. The old Independence Hall was pointed out to us, and the world's largest crane, over there by the navy dock, just four miles away, and we learned that the tonnage of goods shipped was larger than at New York. I don't care if it is ; it means nothing, but the attendant on top of the tower seemed to think that it was important and interesting. I was more interested in his tale of the city being so clean because only hard coal was used, and as little of that as possible. Most of the big buildings had their

steam heating laid on ; the building we were standing on obtained its heat from steam mains that ran through the city from a plant two miles away.

" I hav'n't been over for twenty years," said the attendant. " I suppose London has changed a bit since then, but it looked very dirty and backward then. Dreadful place, I thought."

Standing above the unsmoked bricks of Philadelphia it was a very natural conclusion for an unaffected fellow. There is a lot of nonsense talked about the soft, beautiful atmosphere of London, which is simply nothing but plain dirt, a filthy, poisonous soot hovering always in the undesirably damp air.

We descended to the town into the buried, busy streets with names like Walnut, Spruce, Cherry and Chestnut, by the new Grecian station, Post Office, Art Museum and Planetarium to the wide tree-planted Parkway at the head of which stands the immense Art Gallery mounted on a vast pedestal of innumerable steps. If such a thing is possible the interior of the museum is more vast than the exterior, and in it, set out in beautiful order, is a priceless collection of exquisite work. It was impossible to do anything but wander over the acreage, beginning with the series of rooms from old Pennsylvania houses, elegant panelled rooms, and the Pennsylvania Dutch miller's house which was all good German peasant art. Then there are period rooms from all over the world ; there is a picture gallery with a special exhibition of El Greco ; all the usual bric-à-brac and no sign of one unworthy exhibit ; and, what seemed to us a particularly intelligent acquisition for the New World (*sic*), a complete medieval French chapel, and a ravishing cloistered quadrangle, with a central fountain, from an old monastery in the Pyrenees. It was a brief visit with which to insult so distinguished a collection, but the point that

interested us was *that it was there*, that the rabid industrialism of the United States had gone to this vast trouble and expense for the unbusiness-like world of Art.

From the Art Museum we turned to the Friends Meeting House, and what could have been more appropriate in this city overshadowed by a thirty-foot statue of the Quaker founder of the state. In the large Meeting House, with its plain wooden benches and its spacious white walls, the American Friends Service Council was in session, its members contributing easy, natural speeches without oratorical affectations and very much to the point. Here were descendants of old Quaker settlers, weighty people in the Philadelphia world, the old bits of land of their forefathers producing in these days more gold than corn. There are unfortunate circumstances in the States to which the Friends Service Council has applied its alleviation, but as a Christian gesture, and for real assistance, it turns its attention to troubled Europe, and was, at the moment, discussing methods of assisting German refugees and Spanish children. If the world at large had sufficient intelligence to invite the Society of Friends to manage its affairs these catastrophes would not occur. But the world at large still takes pride in depending upon criminality for its administration ; what is it but a vulgar smash and grab raid on a gigantic scale, and all sensible people can do is to provide an insignificant amelioration, and wait sadly for the next smash.

Interest in the Spanish war, and in the incidence of war in general, was not confined to the American Society of Friends. We had already encountered it among the youth, and in other ways. In various magazines the large propaganda advertisements of World Peaceways had caught my eye from time to time. Here was a vivid and very good drawing of a skeleton, with a tin hat and rifle, and the

terrible caption : " He joined up in '17." Or it was a picture of handsome young soldiers falling during an advance, with the sarcastic caption : " Well, they're out of the way! " The title being inspired by the argument that war is necessary to save the world from over-population. " Well! He's out of the way—but—it cost \$25,000 to kill him! " And now in the Meeting House it cropped up again, when a Ruth Nickolls was invited to step forward and address the meeting. A very pleasant-looking young lady stepped out, and, before making the appeal that was on her mind, stated her background and credentials for so speaking. She is of Quaker heritage and a member of the Society ; she is working for Peace . . . and here my neighbour whispered to me, " Ruth Nickolls is one of our foremost aviators." The speaker went on to unfold a scheme which she and other aviators are organising for advertising Peace by means of flying. They want to get the idea of Peace before as many people as possible in the shortest possible time. There is a weakness, they think, in Peace propaganda going on in fits and starts at different times in different places, and in the swiftness of flying they see the opportunity of getting the whole world to think of Peace at once. There are to be Peace Flights round Europe, South America and North America simultaneously, and her appeal was for the Society of Friends to join, with other bodies, in sponsoring this effort. I have never heard the result of the appeal ; at the time sympathy was expressed, but the Council withheld a definite reply until it had sifted out the complications that might be provoked.

Another dash into the city introduced us to the cosmopolitan side. In the trolley car we sat among Negroes, Jewesses, and rotund nationals from all over Europe, and the shop names were a cavalcade of Europe, the names

running in this fashion : Matz, Hughes, Petronelli, Hot Dogs, Feinberg, Luncheonettes, Ristorante Torino. We alighted by the riverside, a frigid gale blowing us into the city, and we turned into a decaying road, built in by warehouses, that had once been a grand street facing the river. Negro labourers now shuffled among the ghosts of grandeur, and sinister boarded-up windows suggested gangster films. We entered a corner house, which rather surprised me because I had not been listening to the conversation, and I found myself being introduced to some surprisingly respectable ladies and gentlemen, whose names I got mixed up, and whose function in life was quite obscure to me, except that one lady was a story-teller. With extreme caution I found that I was in some sort of social improvement settlement—a dreary way of putting it—for the house was a play-house for the neighbourhood, and from what I could gather life within those walls was one long party. There were classes in all the arts and crafts, and a great passion for play-acting, and some excellent marionettes were produced which the students had made. And you should see the frieze the children had painted on the walls, a co-operative work to which each child had contributed a portrait of a section of the wharf outside in bold drawing and bolder colour. And along the quay ranged a pageant of European peasant costume representing the mixed company of the district. All the drawings were done from actual costumes, which are brought out on gala days. Dances are very popular at the play-house, and bands of unemployed musicians are supplied at government expense under the W.P.A. scheme, but such bands must have all the peasant dances of Europe at their finger ends.

There is no rest for the visitor in America, and the inexorable sleek car carried us away from the play-house, not until

we had absorbed a delicious salad and sandwich lunch, but before we had absorbed half the significance of this gallant company of social workers who led that district to a proper enjoyment of life. The sleek car crept on and deposited us at a house next door to a church. We entered, registered our names in a room furnished with bird cages and tanks of fish, and were led off to the Fleischer Graphic Sketch Club.

One day Mr. Fleischer had seen two Philadelphia gamins admiring cigar box pictures in a shop window. Interested, he had stopped, talked to them, bought them a roll of wall-paper and a ten cent box of crayons, and that was the beginning of his Graphic Sketch Club. He now has the church and a number of large rooms, where thousands of amateurs and professionals have availed themselves of this splendid fellow's hospitality. There is no thought of money. You just go in and draw or paint. There are materials, which you pay for—or you don't, as the case may be. The important thing is that you seek for the realisation and cultivation of your spiritual self in beauty and drawing. There are a lot of people who ought to be pushed into the Graphic Sketch Club with advantage. For instance, there is old M——; but I will stop, not wishing to create international complications. We passed through a room of excellent etchings and into a large gallery of oil paintings and statues, all the work of members. Among the pictures were fine pieces of furniture, and good pottery, and rare carpets on the floor, these to indicate the domestic side of art.

The church is a sanctuary for the members, for rest, meditation and thought. Here they sit in a riot of bric-à-brac, of chairs and tables; brocades and tapestries; wrought iron and wood carvings; saints, crucifixes, icons, altars, screens and religious pictures, all illuminated by hundreds

of tiny candle-lamps set in wrought-iron stands and hanging lamps. Into this mysterious richness there suddenly stole the high clear notes of an organ playing an air of Corelli. Surrounded by all these beautiful things, and thrilled by the clear joyous music, the last of my ancient prejudices about the United States must have snapped. I came out of the Fleischer Graphic Sketch Club a different, if not a wiser and better man. Philadelphia had done that for me—the culture of Philadelphia and a few other experiences made me move in awe of the immense possibility which is America.

A little more of Philadelphia was presented to us on the day when we were lunched elegantly in a luxurious suburb, and walking from the terraced garden we traversed a wild, woodland valley, and by wandering little paths through forest, marsh and streams came down to the banks of the Wissahickon river. For six and a half miles this river runs through a wooded valley that is now a Philadelphia playground. It is closed to vehicular traffic, but you can ride or walk there and imagine yourself in the days when human beings had legs. Or you can glide on the river under the trees in a canoe, and in winter skate and organise sleighing parties, with an old pre-revolution inn in the depths of the valley as a rendezvous. It is so lovely and natural, with its various trees, among them the dark hemlocks, its steep banks and jutting rocks, that you would not be surprised to hear a slight ripple on the water and to see the Great Chief Rainmaker paddle out from behind a rock in his birch canoe. Or you might even come upon the religious enthusiast and his colony who settled here in the seventeenth century, practising prophecy and alchemy, and expecting the world to end in the year 1700. If that was a slight mistake, and not very useful, they did, at least,

IN PHILADELPHIA

present America with her first botanical garden. The valley is loveliest, they say, in winter, when the snow freezes the bushes and trees into statues. It was lovely in April ; it must be lovely at all times, and refreshing to escape there from the city.

VI

AMERICA WARMS UP

WE moved on again, away from Haverford and Philadelphia to George School, another point in the Pennsylvania State. The train conveyed us this time, and through the prettiest American countryside we had yet seen, a charming country of well-tilled fields and level meadows watered by clear, winding streams, or creeks in the American language, a magic word that recalls the works of the old pioneers. There was an English look about these fields, but when we had passed successively through the stations of Cheltenham, Bethlehem, and Southampton we seemed to be in Bedlam.

Alone, in the midst of this country, stands George School, a co-educational school, in a beautiful, undulating campus, decorated with graceful trees, that emerges from the woodlands. The puppets were to perform at the school, but in the meantime we were carried off to a staff house, the typical white painted house with plenty of lawn and flowers. Not that we stayed there long, for, with the free and open life of America, we were soon roving into another neighbouring house, a menage of an American-German marriage, in which, incidentally, the German nature had not found sufficient depth in American life and was on its way back to Germany.

It was at George School that we first discovered the country minutiae of the United States. The American mind operates in such wide, sweeping movements that it does not

always stop to notice the flowers it is crushing beneath its feet. America has been reaching out to distant frontiers ; she has had to deal with limitless prairies, deserts, and vast forests ; her counties are countries, and her country a continent compared with the English topographical sense, and consequently the stile beneath the oak, the primrose under the nut bushes, and the hedge-poker's nest in the thorn bush have hardly been noticed. But we were very much relieved to find that they were there, and that the arid conception of America as being nothing but film production in the West, and Wall Street in the East, with a dreary waste and Chicago in between was terribly inadequate.

Here, at George School, we wandered in the April woods under a radiant summer sun, and came down to a clear brook and a ravishing corner of meadow and woodland where small birds twittered in the bushes, and violets and masses of a white, starry flower glittered profusely on the grassy bank of the burbling stream. It was all quietness and loveliness, and when, in the dreamy stillness, a fly buzzed in my ear I knew it was the country. Down at our feet we could look into intricate miracles of beauty contained in a few square inches, and, looking up, there were the meadows and silent woods, calm and radiant under the sun, the dignified, orderly surface of the world.

The birds were unfamiliar, like specimens in a museum. An obvious nuthatch walked down a tree trunk, and for a moment we saw a cardinal bird, entirely scarlet, blazing against the blue sky. Small black and orange birds shot up and down the dogwood bushes in a strange way, and we were suddenly conscious of being examined by a monstrous affair, brown with a red breast, but about six times the proper size, which Winifred introduced as an American

robin. This gigantic creature hopped three enormous steps, and then cocked its head on one side to examine us. He gave three more prodigious leaps and cocked his head the other way, continuing to encircle us, three hops at a time, until he had completed a thorough investigation of the strange English visitors.

When we had returned to the house I found, as I would have found in a similar English country house, a book on birds, and discovered that the American robin, in spite of his size, has similar habits to our Christmas card variety; he haunts farms and houses, and even cities, if, the book continued to say, he is not too severely persecuted by the English sparrow. On looking up the English sparrow we learned that he had been introduced to the States for the purpose of suppressing the Japanese beetle—quite an international situation, in fact. Unfortunately the Japanese beetle still ravages American plants, and the sparrow has turned his suppressive talents to the native birds. To quote the naturalists, “they are fighters and bullies from the time they leave the egg, and few of our native birds will attempt to live in the neighbourhood with them.” Not at all pleasant reading, but I hope that in a few generations the English sparrow will settle down into being a good easy-going American citizen.

This countryside is served by a small town, Newtown; not at all new, but a pre-Revolution settlement, and still containing a good Quaker proportion. But like these American country towns it looks fresh, with all its white painted wooden houses under the green trees and the quantities of open grass and flowers. Many of the simple houses have a stylish eighteenth-century cut about them, and in State Street some pre-Separation houses were being stripped of latter-day accumulations to reveal large open hearth fires under great

beams, and beautifully panelled doors with carved frames—all good old European.

In Newtown I had my first American hair-cut, quite an ordinary operation, but it cost, if I remember, about two shillings. The smart, handsome barber clipped to radio music, and danced from his work to the machine with the constant remark, "Huh! Talking again!"

The "talking" was the advertising announcement between the items of music, and I hope advertisers will note that it caused us nothing but annoyance, and that we immediately switched to another station in search of more music. I heard a dozen scraps from different stations, but the coaxing, pleading, pathetic appeal to wash our undies in some sort of soap left us unmoved, and we did not "just get a piece of paper now—get it right now, and just note this address. . . ."

While in Newtown the sun had become very apparent, and by the afternoon we were convinced that America has a very warm climate. On the way to setting up the puppet theatre we crossed the sports field, where a track meet was in progress and a number of events being contested with half a dozen visiting teams from other schools. The active athletes were clearing prodigious heights at the pole vault, clearing hurdles like swallows, and stepping briskly through the half-mile. It is little wonder that American athletes are good in track and field events when they can depend upon such weather and can organise these inter-school contests in running and jumping.

We were shown over the school, and saw the Negro cooks, in the kitchens, singing like radio stars, perfectly at home in a temperature that was suffocating to us. We drank tea with the faculty in a long pleasant Georgian room with large windows that looked over the lovely, sunny campus,

and we inspected the very good marionette theatre that the school had made. We saw all the fine buildings, the school shop, and the swimming bath—everything—which leaves us with the impression of a handsome school in acres of lovely grounds basking eternally in a summer sun.

And if I remember anything of the puppet performance it was the heat, and the warm summer night through which we were whisked to Newtown to be cooled off by iced drinks in the bright drug store. The proprietor had been born in Sussex, England, a fact which did not seem to impress him very much, and at the moment he was indulging in a One Cent Sale ; that is, you buy two articles for the price of one with a ridiculous one cent—worth less than a halfpenny—added.

Being ready to go anywhere and see anything American we were loaded into the inevitable car on the Sunday, and carried through more charming country, the small-farm country of Bucks county, a gently undulating world of hundred-acre farms, valued at about seven thousand dollars. There were woods and wild streams, vivid fields of young wheat, ploughland and clover, and below us the Delaware river, running beneath a ridge of faint, far-away hills.

We ran into history by way of Trenton, coming into the National Park which has been established around the point in the Delaware river where Washington crossed his army on Christmas night and defeated the British forces. So, here we were surrounded by the stars and stripes where *we* had been defeated, but as it is possible that all nations grow great and wise according to the number of times their conceited egoism has been defeated and invaded, and enriched by successive cultures, I hoped that the defeat had been good for us. All the same it was an uncomfortable thing to

do on a Christmas night—but I have no doubt they sang some good Christian carols.

I hope there will never be another battle of Trenton for many reasons, and one because the plain is now green with lovely grass that stretches out to the wooded hills rising above the river—and it would be a pity to spoil it. We were run up one of the hills, the car parked among an army of others, and we climbed the stone memorial tower on top to survey a vast and faintly coloured scene of river and sunny country. We descended by way of a wild flower preserve, where nearly every flower of the United States can be found, and part of which is a “picking field”, where you help yourself. It is a pleasant park, very large, and a mixture of wild and tame, where you can have your meals in a pre-Revolution inn.

We moved again along the bank of the wide river, passing through New Hope, where many artists live and paint pictures, make pots and hand-weave, and have an old stone mill as a community house, and altogether have a very pretty pitch, with the separate painted houses among the flower gardens and trees. The undulating country of small farms was apparently endless, and we were interested to visit one of them, to find lawns and flowers under the pale plane trees about the stone house. There were grape vines, and white chickens in marvellous two-storey houses, and the house itself was a decent old eighteenth-century English house, with open fire-places and white panelled rooms, all beautifully and intelligently maintained by the hard-working farmers.

That was George School, and again we moved by way of New York to Princeton—which is too pretty to be true. I have heard it called the prettiest town in the States, and that may be so. With the quantities of white paint it looked very

fresh and new, and with more trees and flowers and lawns than houses it is a town in a bower of sunny flowers and leaves. We stayed in the inevitable white house with a Georgian lintel and fanlight, and an interior delightful with white paint, polished floors and antique furniture—a good furnishing that appeared to have been there for ever, and would stay for ever in a perpetual state of tasteful just-rightness.

Outside, in the warm sunny street, were other similar houses, toy painted houses with symmetrical green shutters, shaded by sycamores and maples, with neat beds of tulips and spring flowers in open gardens, or simply marked off with low privet. Here and there, like a fairy, trembled the white or faint pink flowers of the dogwood tree. The dogwood is America's pride in the spring. It is in the gardens, the parks, and in the woods, where the clouds of pure white blossoms float among the tree trunks like angels. It is beautiful when in bud, the green buds on the brown branches weaving delicate cretonne patterns, until the day comes when they turn into the pure, waxen flowers that float in spreading planes on the sensitive structure of spindly branches.

The street was quiet and infinitely sunny. The only signs of life the coming and going of a few cars, the passing of a coloured servant or two, or a rare undergraduate in very light sports clothing. There was a perpetual twitter of birds in the trees and a cool breeze to temper the sun. Life in Princeton with a steady un-earned ten thousand dollars a year could be pleasant—if entirely useless.

We walked out to see the college, passing on the way the little grey house under the trees where the famous Professor Einstein now lives. All the tales about the Professor make him out an adorable person. It is said that he has a passion

for ice-cream cones, that he wanders out to find one, perpetually loses his way and is conducted back to his house, ice-cream cone in hand, by little girls. All the same, he has attracted a group of famous scholars about him, and Princeton is now the centre of the mathematical world.

The college buildings are very well done, warm red brick Tudor, but our guide lost the way, and after encountering the college dustbins we were embarrassed, and retreated. But we were there again in the evening, to a play of A. A. Milne's, *The Ivory Door*, delightfully presented by the dramatic club of Miss Fine's school, and in the clear and lovely American night the college buildings and trees were exceedingly romantic.

A Sunday expedition took us about seventy miles to the northern hills of Pennsylvania, a drive through beautiful farm country, getting more and more hilly and with wide, wide scenes of hills and valleys over the river Pequest. We mounted to the Pocono plateau, where, being some two thousand feet above sea-level, spring had not yet arrived, but it was pleasant in the deep woods, among which a holiday camp has been established around a lake. They have room to do these things superlatively well in America. All the houses must be out of sight of the lake and of one another, and such pleasant wooden houses, mostly one large room with an heroic hearth fire, and with canoe sails and fishing rods in the corners.

Up to this moment our visit had moved miraculously, as if a well-oiled pleasure was the inviolable routine of Princeton, but shortly after we had left the Pocono camp to return our car developed a mysterious noise. It was very slight, but even to my un-motorist ears it was persistent and out of place. Inquiries for a garage sent us down a side road, and inquiries as to what was wrong sent us into fits.

"Have you far to go?" inquired the man ominously.

Without information or comment he served out some gas and then tried the car up the road.

"Hum! I'll tell you what it is in a minute," and he turned away to serve out some more gallons of gas, and when he came back asked if we wanted to get home that night. He drew a diagram of the car's inside and pointed out a broken pin.

"Might run you into big money and lots of trouble. Can't say if you'd do fifty miles—you might make it. You might crack up in two. I can't say. Mean big money if it goes further. Seen two like that lately. Same make of car, same year."

"Can you repair it?"

"I can, but it means half a day's work! I don't know if I could clear you by twelve."

Thinking midnight would do, and hoping for eleven, he was started on the job, while we walked up the road to get a meal. It was then six o'clock. We spent a long time on the meal, played all the tunes in the slot gramophone, and sat in the rocking chairs on the porch. So far it was not bad; there was a green hill before us, and the farmlands were softening in the short twilight, while innumerable frogs piped melodiously in the evening air. We set out to explore the country, but sudden and heavy rain drove us back to the garage. The mechanic was working hard and making a lot of noise, but it was depressing to see half the entrails of the car spread around the garage floor. The man was entirely uncommunicative, and we went into his little barbecue bar, which was so small that we felt like clumsy and incongruous giants. It was then eight o'clock, and after an hour or so we walked up the road again, through blinding rain and tearing traffic, in search of more food and distraction.

At *The Tiny Cafe* we loitered until eleven o'clock, and then, full of hope, we were driven back by the cafe proprietor to the garage. But the mechanic was still on his back under the car, and the works still scattered over the floor. When we inquired as to how he was getting along he made a lot of noise as if he did not want to hear, and we settled down in the bar again, bravely attempting to play games. At twelve o'clock the man got his wife to help, and at one o'clock she came into the bar to entertain us, and one of our company was so bright and polite and talkative for that hour that I thought her on the verge of hysterics. Another of our company had collapsed on a table, asleep, and we began to feel pop-eyed and too tired to sit still. The landlady concluded the long tale of the dog that had to be shot, and then went to bed.

At two o'clock a car pulled up in the road outside with a terrifying screech of brakes, and we could feel the occupants looking in at us, peering from the car at the forms flopping in the little bar. We wondered if they were planning a hold-up, or if they suspected us of having been bumped off in the lonely garage; but it is still a mystery, for the car moved on again.

In the garage all this time the mechanic was under the car, banging, thudding and rattling. There had been one extra commotion followed by a loud "Damn!" That was when his wife was entertaining us with how she did the washing, and she broke off that enthralling tale to say, "My husband don't speak much—only when things are going wrong!" And it was fairly obvious that the solitary expletive was a pretty long speech for him.

At three o'clock the engine turned, and the car began to throb. The mechanic climbed into the seat and drove out on the road, returning to say the job was finished, and quite

pleased with himself. By six o'clock we were back at Princeton after a dark ride only distinguished by the numbers of lorries that passed, or were drawn up by the road-side while the drivers slept. They were mostly those huge trucks that carry five automobiles at once, delivering them from the various plants at Detroit about a thousand miles away.

We had thrust out into various directions, covering a small part of the one state of Pennsylvania, and it was while we were chirping about how much we admired it and liked it that two dark eyes, set behind broad cheek-bones, looked at us fixedly and a low voice asked somnolently if we were going to see anything of the real Americans. We had a feeling that Indian blood was speaking to us, and it was rather a shock. I suppose our ignorance of the American Indian is equal to anyone's—"The only good Injun is a dead Injun," a very terse and pithy aphorism, but could it be possible that our schoolboy conception of the Red Indian was a good deal distorted? It had been a curious sensation to see the American woods, because they were so like our English woods with only a better climate added. Of course, they were not the original woods, but they must have been similar to the virgin forests, and they did not have that lurid and sinister atmosphere which one is inclined to imagine from the reading of "bloods". The real Americans, eh? That was a bit of a poser, and at the moment we had a very remote idea of seeing Indians at all, and no idea of what a revelation it would be when we did encounter them. In the meantime we travelled on again to New York, where there are representatives of every nation in the world, and possibly there may be an American Indian or two as well.

VII

WE GO ON THE AIR

NEW YORK was shut in by clouds and the topmost buildings were wreathed and swathed in wandering mists. Now and again rain fell, and it was astonishing to see that even the rain is taller in New York than elsewhere. It is simply a natural phenomenon, and not an eccentricity, that everything should be tall in America ; tall buildings are the natural development of the limited area of Manhattan and its rocky foundation ; tall stories spring from the vast area of the continent, but it was surprising to see such long streams of rain revealed, as they were, against the high walls.

In the Big City you travel vertically as well as horizontally, and at the WOR radio station I was removed from the ground level, which always feels a little out of the picture, to nearer the centre of the city on a twenty-fourth floor.

" You going on the air with Martha Deane? " inquired the svelte young princess at the chromium desk. It sounded delightful, and suggested a flight among the angels.

" All right," sang the princess, " you are in studio five. Go right in."

" Come right in," sang the engineer in charge of the studio. " Hang your coat on our seven hundred dollar coat stand, Mr. Wilkinson," and he waved towards the grand piano in the corner.

I had come a little early imagining that some rehearsal would be necessary before my words sailed out over the American air. I had no idea of what was to happen, except

that I was "going on the air with Martha Deane". I pumped the engineer about the technicalities and learned from him that my voice would be "o-kayed" at the controls, and that he had not seen any puppets since he "was knee high to a grasshopper", a delightful simile that sent me wandering into summer fields instead of inventing a talk about puppets. One minute before the programme was due to start Martha Deane arrived, a cheerful lady, blue-eyed and fresh complexioned and just as natural and wholesome as her name implies. She took off her gloves, arranged some notes, explained briefly that she would give me five or seven or eight minutes, and that she might ask me a question or two which she would leave until the moment arrived—if it was all the same to me! I was given a seat at the end of a table with a microphone opposite, and Martha Deane and a handsome announcer, Vincent, took chairs on the opposite sides of the table. The engineers appeared behind one observation window, and some spectators behind another—we were on the air!

Talking at the handsome Vincent, who reclined elegantly with one elbow on the table, Martha Deane commenced a very clever and buoyant non-stop talk, beginning with a three days' old manicure, still fresh, and exhibited to Vincent, passed to dresses and hats, and then to the cherry blossoms in the Bronx Park—"so fragile that you feel a touch of the finger would just shatter them." This reminded Miss Deane of a lot of Japanese lore, which, in its turn, reminded her of Comet Brown Rice Flakes, and Vincent was asked if he had started the day with them.

He sure had.

"And I guess you'd have them for lunch, too, if you could get them, wouldn't you?"

"I sure would."

"And for dinner and supper as well, wouldn't you, Vincent?"

Vincent was most obligingly enthusiastic.

The description of the crisp crackle of the flakes made my mouth water, and while I was resolving to buy some, Vincent rose from his chair and indicated that I should take his place. A leading question from the very competent Martha Deane started me talking, and as she contrived to look exceedingly interested it was easy to continue—but I have no doubt that she was watching the time and thinking up the next part of her programme while simulating a bright interest in my talk. A few questions rounded off the talk; I was dismissed in favour of a recommendation of Colman's Mustard, lowered to the street again, and began to look at the street life.

A few yards brought me to the famous Times Square and to that wonderful newspaper stand which exhibits the papers from all over America—and that is saying a good deal. While studying this geographical orgy, and imagining all the wild people this mass of papers represented, a tiny, frail woman in faded black emerged from the boisterous crowd like a wraith and without a word bought an *Athol Daily News* or some such voice from home. It was exactly like one of the incidental drawings in the *New Yorker*; it was pathetic.

I stopped to look in a book shop, at the piles of *Gone With the Wind*, *The Years*, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, *Coronation Commentary* and the royal portraits surrounded by Union Jacks and ribbons, when the conversation of two men fell on my ears.

"You see, it's no use looking at it from our point of view."

"No. You just got to get the other fellows twist on it."

"And it isn't a personal matter. I mean it isn't the personality of the king exactly."

"No, no! That's right! It's what he represents. He stands for some abstract idea—some principle."

"That's it—he's a symbol, a unifying symbol."

"And it doesn't matter how much to the left an Englishman is—or Britisher I should say—he still respects the Crown."

"Yeah! It represents the abstract idea of his country—his national ideal, something over and above his politics."

"Yeah, but this fella's a bit too human for them."

A little further on half-a-dozen strike pickets were parading placards before a shop, *Please Don't Buy Here*, while a good-humoured-looking policeman, with drawn club, stood on guard.

Negroes, with flashing teeth and rolling eyes, walked by; synthetic young women, bronzed men in hot-climate clothes, young bucks in English homespuns, many tall men, shorter Latin types, and Jews carrying cased musical instruments under their arms all set up intriguing speculations. The startling word DRUGS continually alarmed me, until I had adjusted it to its American sense, and saw a flashing counter lined with customers quick, and cheap-lunching on Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Club Sandwiches, coffee and crullers. I went in to buy a pack of cigarettes, and was presented with the inevitable book of matches advertising the Drug Store or some firm's goods. The streets had a sociable buoyant atmosphere, and I felt that one could do a lot of walking in that varied crowd beneath the towering, exciting buildings without boredom.

Having met Winifred we turned into a cafeteria for lunch, and for the experience. It is an amusing system of cheap feeding which eliminates the expense of waiters, and I wonder it does not develop more in other countries. An attendant was quick to see that we were novices in the art

of the cafeteria, and he loaded us with trays, paper napkins and cutlery, and hoped that we would enjoy our lunch and come again. We joined the queue filing down the counter loaded with a great variety of enticing dishes, and we collected salads, milk, strawberry shortcakes and cream cheese which were all very fresh and exceedingly good. But the help yourself cafeteria lunch is not so restful as the "waitered" meal; having all the courses together on the tray you walk straight through the lot, but with a waiter you do a little waiting yourself and progress with a better restraint.

In the afternoon we visited an entertainment agent to enquire into his working methods. Fifth Avenue was thick with pedestrians, and sleek cars and taxis, but very few buses, blocked the road. There was no confusion, but it took a good time to get across the Avenue, and also some patience to discover the agent's location on the huge directory in the hall of a vast building. With incredible speed we were turned out near the fortieth floor, and as we waited by an open window came to the conclusion that this was the right height at which to live in New York. On the street level you are buried; anything over the fortieth floor would be too much above the battle, but at about thirty-five you are in the centre of things, and the great city opens before you; you can see where you are in that towering world, and look between the great buildings to the river and the sea.

The agent was frank and very much to the point. All his arrangements would be made at least fourteen months in advance, and he would require a good deposit for advertising. Hand-puppets, which he knew all about, had been badly done in America; there were many good marionette companies and they did good business, but for hand-puppets clients would expect to pay only about twenty-five dollars

... "and you have to have a name here. If you've got a name we can sell you. We sell names. It doesn't matter how good your show is—if you haven't got a name in this country you'll lose out. We would take care of everything. We gotta staff of forty, buying railroad tickets, arranging for hotels, luggage, trains—everything. But you gotta have a name here before we can sell you. That's what we sell—names! "

Names! Radio City Music Hall has a name, a very large name for the largest auditorium and the most stupendous lavish show, and we went on from the agent to the show with a name. It seemed to be selling well enough—the small figures seated in the great vacancy were innumerable—but after all the ballyhoo and the high price of admission we only saw a very ordinary film which could have been seen at any cinema in England for a "bob"—and hardly worth that. There were some dancing girls, thirty-six of them with thirty-six legs cocking up in the air like one centipede. But what is the interest of that? They were so automatic and so well matched that they were not even pornographic. And as for dancing—why! my hand puppets come nearer to dancing than that, and if one of my audiences showed the apathy of that crowd I would be in despair and considering suicide for the next week.

We finished the day at the Belasco Theatre to see *Dead End*, then in its second year, and that has now been produced by the cinema. The audience here was very alive, a young, mixed audience that was evidently intensely interested in this study of slum life, and in these children that used terrorism and the knife, naturally, in their games, but, on the other hand, could show that in these dreadful conditions dignified and fine characters could have their being. It was warm in the theatre and the audience took off its coats. It

entertaining other people ourselves, and took the puppets to Haverford College, a college that is distinguished for many reasons. It stands in a large and lovely campus, with a lake, flowers, an avenue of the fairy dogwood trees, and groves of handsome trees like an English park—the campus, in fact, was laid out by an English gardener, William Carvill, a hundred years ago. The college, in spite of increasing fame, has deliberately remained small, and faithful to scholarship. It has a distinguished staff, among them Rufus M. Jones, LL.D., Professor of Philosophy, and the author of many books on religion and philosophy, and also that famous Elizabethan scholar, Leslie J. Hotson, Ph.D., who has discovered new facts as to Shakespeare's private life.

The college is also distinguished because it is one of the very few in America that still plays cricket. In between planting trees that English gardener, William Carvill, taught those early students to bat and bowl, and they have been at it ever since. The college team has made six tours of England, the last in 1925, and has won games with Rugby, Shrewsbury and Haileybury, which is interesting because many of the Haverford cricketers have not played the game at all until they came to the college. Unlike so many American colleges Haverford does not make a paying business of its sport. "No student has ever received a dollar of aid at Haverford on the ground that he was an athlete," announced one President, which is true to this day.

It was at Haverford that we were so filled with joy because the negro janitor suffered an electric shock while fixing our lighting. For the best part of an hour he went about his work on the stage shaking with laughter and continually saying to himself in every possible tone, "Ah gotta shock.

Ah gotta shock." It was such infectious merriment that we could not help laughing too.

After a gracious introduction by a member of the English faculty, Professor Reitzel, an old Oxford scholar, the puppets warmed to their task, in more senses than one, and gathered from the applause that they had not disgraced that dignified Roberts Hall or desecrated the boards from which President Wilson and many famous men had addressed the college. Of course there were puppeteers in the audience; it is seldom that an audience, either American or English, does not produce professional or amateur devotees in these days.

And we took the puppets to the New York suburb of Scarsdale, where they performed to an audience of children in the afternoon, and to adults in the evening, and where we met more educationists who brought pretty marionettes, that had been made in their schools, to show us. We went to Scarsdale from the Grand Central Station, which might easily be called the Very, Very Grand Central, it is so large, beautiful and imposing, so awe-inspiring that you buy a couple of ordinary tickets with bated breath. But we came home on the Subway, in the noisiest, shakiest old junk of a train that we have ever travelled in. I am surprised at New York! The Subway and the Elevated Railroad are the two venerable antiques of the city. The deafening Elevated is to be removed, I understand, but not until the Subway is modernised will New York be one hundred per cent. perfect. The Subway is almost as crowded as our London Tubes, but its trains are gaunt old skeletons that rattle every bone in their horrific journey through the rocky bowels of New York.

These few performances had already brought me a miscellaneous mail. Were my books produced under trade union conditions? Was I coming to Canada? Would I

read the enclosed poems? And one was an invitation to visit the Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration to see their collection of puppets. A bulletin was enclosed describing an exhibition of puppetry which the museum had arranged a year or so before. If I quote the opening paragraphs it will give an indication of the serious and high standard of puppet-showing in the United States.

"... the contemporary note was given by several exhibits; perhaps most strikingly by two puppets of Louis Bunin and William A. Dwiggins respectively—one, a conception of the masses, robots, mechanized individuals who walk the city streets, without individuality, mere abstractions; the other, a head made of metal bands strangely lighted, described by its designer, Mr. Dwiggins, as an 'experimental puppet, "Point Three Three Repetitive,"' one of the persons in a melodrama in preparation portraying the revolt of mankind at some future time, against the evolved machines that have assumed control. 33+ is a member of the Board of Control.

"Among other puppets made in the twentieth century, as individual in their way as the mechanical overlord of Mr. Dwiggins, but constructed with more traditional materials and depending for their significance rather on the original use of that material, was the superb *Jocasta*, over eight feet high, designed by Robert Edmond Jones for a performance of *Oedipus Rex*, given under the auspices of the League of Composers with accompaniment by the Philadelphia Orchestra. This was lent by Remo Buffano.

"As well as contemporary American puppets there were loans of eighteenth-century Venetian puppets, a wonderful Punchinello of the same period, lent by Tony Sarg, Chinese and Javanese shadow figures, a little puppet, *John the Baker*, bought from a donkey's back in Mexico, photographs of

puppets and books on puppets, and the twenty-five original Cruikshank drawings which the artist was commissioned to make of a Punch and Judy show in Covent Garden. These came from Princeton University."

We had missed the exhibition, but we went to the Cooper Union Museum and saw the charming *Commedia dell'arte* figures, the pretty French shadow figures, a Mexican marionette, peep-shows, automatic sand toys, and a thousand and one other entrancing exhibits in other *genres*.

This flirtation with the mighty New York was terminated by the arrival once more of the magic shiny car, and we flowed out of New York by the Riverside flats, by the graceful George Washington suspension bridge, past the Palisades rising abruptly from the Hudson river, by smaller and smaller houses and the beginnings of verdure, which appeared surprisingly close to the city, and by the house built by the Negro lady who had made a fortune by straightening Negro curls, while her white sisters had been making fortunes by putting curls into white hair. We came to rest at Tarrytown, in another white, wooden house among lawns and trees, with a charming view over the Hudson and the hills. You could work in New York and live in Tarrytown. After the intense concentration of the city you could get out of the train in the evening and find the station on the river bank, with small urchins fishing from rocks only a couple of yards away, and a picturesque line of old wooden houses by the harbour. You could live in a pretty wooden house near the woods, and, a few years ago, you might have been a neighbour of the great John D. Rockefeller who had an estate here which, at one time, he had been forced to fortify against angry trade unionists.

VIII

BUSY ROUND BOSTON

A PROCESSION of three Negro porters carried our baggage out of Boston station. Three large smiles exposed three large sets of teeth, and three cheerful "Thank yew, sirs" responded to the presentation of three suitable rewards from our host. It was a delightful entry into the city, but we were not to stay in Boston. Our hosts were taking us to stay at Wellesley. They had gone to endless trouble in planning amusements for us and in arranging audiences for the puppets to meet. In between performances we were to get on nodding terms with the countryside, and also with this famous city.

They had thought it all out, and had decided to break us in gently by starting with the North Church, which, with its London associations, and in spite of its proximity to Bunkers Hill, would be an easy mouthful for English visitors. After New York, Boston looked quite domestic with its quantities of red bricks, streets of red brick houses, that had a familiar English look. But then the scene changed a bit, for we traversed with difficulty a crowded Little Italy, with the streets full of social intercourse, where the shopkeepers, both man and wife, were sitting in chairs on the threshold of their shops; old women like country peasants sat on doorsteps, stout ladies in gowns posed at open windows, and groups of lads congregated round the lamp-posts and at street corners. Out of this we came suddenly on the old North Church, which is delightful. It is a copy of St.

Bartholomew's of Blackfriars, completely eighteenth century, but far whiter and lighter inside than any London church can ever have been. And it achieves a character of its own by the cosy, enclosed pew which had been reserved for visiting sea captains, and from its belfry the lanterns were flashed which started Paul Revere on his fateful ride to Concord. Mounting a hill opposite the church we came into an old graveyard with little gravestones engraved elegantly with weeping willows and angels like the headings to eighteenth-century poems. We looked over to the harbour and the ships, and blushed at the sight of the memorial on Bunkers Hill.

After crawling through more crowded, narrow streets, and climbing sudden hills, we began to feel that we were in Victorian London. Some of the streets and squares in the neighbourhood of Louisberg Square, where Louisa Alcott lived, are better preserved London than London itself. Cecil Sharpe had to visit America in search of old English songs, and I can see the day coming when, if you want to see what early Victorian or eighteenth-century London looked like, it will be necessary to visit Boston. Then we crossed the market, and were informed that it is a replica of Covent Garden! The old City Hall, from which the Repeal was read, is a pretty Queen Anne building, and the Lion and the Unicorn are still perched on its roof.

We wandered on the Common—yes, Common—and in the gardens, and saw more evidence of the conservatism of Boston in the famous old boats, on the lake, that have a row of seats in front and, at the stern, a large white swan within which is a man—a modern American man—paddling the things slowly and delightfully round the ornamental waters. And then, at the Central Library, while we waited for a friend, numbers of school-girls came in to stare at the frieze

of the Holy Grail painted by Edwin Abbey. They walked round systematically and made notes as our school-girls of two or three generations ago must have made notes on Burne-Jones and Rossetti.

But, of course, that is not the whole of Boston by any means. We watched coloured men playing baseball on the Common, arguing and gesticulating more than playing; we explored Kresge's five and ten cent store; we had been through an Italian quarter and we lunched in a Norwegian restaurant, helping ourselves from a Smorgassbord and accompanying the cold collation with rye bread and brown bread sprinkled with caraway seeds. And among the various national traits there was quite a lot of American influence as well.

We also sought out Mr. Punch's Workshop in Chestnut Street, but found that this successful puppet company had moved to a larger project in some other city. We were disappointed because the pictures of these hand-puppets look remarkably good, and serious hand-puppet theatres are so much more rare than marionettes. Mr. Punch's Workshop is run by three people: "...the trio includes Miss Catherine Huntington, a Boston woman who acted and directed for four years on the Boston stage and in society plays, and two Californians, John Ralph Geddis and Francois Martin, both artists and actors of long experience. Miss Huntington was for several years on the staff of the School of Fine Arts and Design; Mr. Geddis has had about ten years' experience in all divisions of the theatre, including acting and costuming. Mr. Martin, a painter primarily, is also a skilled actor, having gleaned his experience in Santa Barbara and various other places, including Mexico."

One season's list of plays suggests that its ambitions are very far removed from *Punch and Judy*:

BUSY ROUND BOSTON

<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>	<i>Doctor in Spite of Himself</i>
<i>Bourgeois Gentilhomme</i>	<i>Little Flowers of Saint Francis</i>
<i>The Little Mermaid</i>	<i>The Two Bears</i>
<i>Oedipus</i>	<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
<i>Fiesta Mexicana</i>	<i>Pierre Patelin</i>
<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>	<i>Cinderella.</i>

After staring at a strange city for a few hours I inevitably grow ashamed of my curiosity, become more and more of a stranger, and in despair of ever learning anything whatever about it, but, I suppose, some useful impression survives that weaves itself proportionally into the patchwork quilt of the globe, and, certainly, to see the First Church of Christ Scientist, and the amazing offices of the *Christian Science Monitor*, is to understand how that fine paper the *Christian Science Monitor* spreads itself about the world. We were interviewed very carefully and intelligently in the editorial room of the paper, a room as efficient, orderly and as "well done" as the paper itself; we were introduced to Miss Strachan, of Yorkshire, who talked to us of the puppets of Papa Manteo, the old traditional marionette master of Mulberry Street, New York; we wandered round the hall, and in the circular room in which you are surrounded by a map of the globe, and it was Mr. Sowerby, also from Yorkshire and Foreign Editor of the paper, and the poetess, his wife, who took us to lunch at the delightful Norwegian restaurant. The Christian Science buildings are beautiful and impressive, and one of the newer notes in Boston; they are very large—almost a city in themselves.

Outside the city a great storm came over the line of Harvard University buildings on the river bank, and on the rowing men on the river, but torrential rain is of little inconvenience in America—you are always in a car. On the

way to the university we passed a huge cold storage for "your winter furs" which for the moment seemed more significant than the university. But we went on to look at Harvard—we looked at it—a very futile thing to do, but we entered the wonderful Widener Memorial Library, where an eager custodian pointed out a Shakespeare first folio valued at thousands of dollars, the best collection of R. L. Stevenson in the world, also valued at thousands of dollars, and another collection of thousands of dollars by Cruikshank. Rather facetiously we asked if the Cruikshank collection included the *Real History of Mr. Punch*, and like a shot the attendant replied, "Yes! I saw a girl working on it last week!" Upstairs in a smaller library, we were shown letters and manuscripts of John Keats, also valued at thousands of dollars, and his first volume of poems inscribed in his own hand to Fanny Brawne, and as we handled the precious leaves I felt like trying to shed a tear for all poor poets who are never paid for their work. Poetry is to the fore at Cambridge; near the university is the large wooden house that Longfellow lived in, and we dined in the original village smithy of Longfellow's poem, a pretty rambling cottage furnished with antiques. One suspects there must be as many antique furniture factories in America as in England and Italy, but real or replica—and I could not tell the difference—there is a quantity of good old furniture in America.

At Wellesley our hosts took us to their house, once again the bright, white-painted wooden house in a green garden under large trees, and which had once enjoyed that American trick of being put on rollers and shifted from a neighbouring road to its present position. Our hosts had arranged a strenuous week for us, but they knew it would tax our

strength, and a room had been set apart for us to sulk in when the impact of America threatened to annihilate us entirely—and, we could get up at any hour in the morning—which I am afraid we did. They fed us under the apple tree in the garden, in the dining-room, and round the wood fire in the bright drawing-room, and plied us with interesting magazines, novels, books about New England, and poems. They introduced us, too, to the Ann Hathaway Bookshop, which lent us more books—more than we could ever digest, but it was delightful to have them around and widen our knowledge a little of the New England countryside by means of excellent photographs of old houses, sailing ships, and the coast. The Ann Hathaway Bookshop is more a college of literature than a shop. Some of its customers seemed to live there. It has every possible book of merit, both American and English, a room full of poetry, and all the American poets seemed to have been there at one time or another to meet their readers, and to acquaint themselves with the clever women who seemed to sell literature with the inspired faith of zealots.

As well as all this our hosts chauffeured us and the puppets to all the performances they had arranged, and we began the next morning with travelling to Worcester through leafy, lovely country, becoming acquainted with the New England fields, sturdy fields with out-croppings of rock, fields full of character and dramatically alive with the contrasts of grey rock, light green grass, and the dark green juniper bushes.

At the Bancroft School, Worcester, we carried the puppets through a crowd of children playing happily outside the school. Inside the school, as we put up the theatre on the well-equipped stage, a demonstration of dancing exercises was being given in the hall by children for parents; to the music of MacDowell the girls carried through a series

of severe balancing and muscle raising exercises that suggested a very thorough basis for serious dancing. After the performance we were photographed with the students of puppetry, who had made a pretty set of American Indian hand-puppets.

They were enjoyable audiences that responded freely to our English sense of humour, which pleasantly surprised me because it has been hinted that English humour is unappreciated by the Americans, and vice versa. But at a kindergarten school the children laughed and applauded so riotously that everyone was a little frightened, and the mistress, rather puzzled by the outburst, could only say, "Well, *they say* it's good for children to laugh, and I said to myself Mr. Wilkinson is handing out the chance."

At the Handsome Dana Hall School in Wellesley we found a very sympathetic audience in a lovely hall, and, to add to our slight acquaintance with American education, we arrived in the middle of a music lesson, and set the theatre to expert performances of Chopin, and to a particularly sweet and true singing of Schumann's *Nussbaum*.

From these experiences it seemed that American school children are very well provided for in very modern schools. I know there is a tradition that American classes are a year or two behind the standards of European classes, but it is probably an ancient generalisation that begins to lose its meaning nowadays. American needs and conditions are different from European needs; America is large and conditions vary; and, after all, America is educating the illiterates of the grand and supercilious Europe that denied them any education at all.

As to the educational standards of Wellesley College I am not in a position to judge, but the huge building in Gothic style, standing in three hundred acres of rolling hills, wood-

lands, and meadows, has distributed about the whole world a great many distinguished and dignified women. We were invited to the Tree Day ceremony, and found it very impressive in spite of the students being dressed in the fashion of the moment—the very neat and sensible white cotton coats known as beer-jackets. They presented a ballet of Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince* with an enormous amplified musical accompaniment coming out of the tree-tops. It was a widespread production over a great space of lovely grass, and in spite of the grunting, walloping music its effect was beautiful, and poignant, too, when you thought of all those nice earnest girls learning, in this artistic manner, to give their gold away to the poor—if they ever have any gold, and if they do ever give it away!

The story of Wellesley College cannot be told here, but I must remark that the French students have a hand-puppet theatre to assist their studies. In case any reader should despise this as childishness, which it is not, I can add that arrangements are also made for language students to spend a period at European universities.

What beautiful grounds the college has, with its own Lake Wampan, the woods, and all those lawns and fine trees, and a very generous allowance of sunlight. If Europe is sometimes supercilious about American colleges, from the point of view of habitation and the possibilities of progress the laugh is to the Americans every time.

The sleek car ran us about the country, through the tidy Massachusetts farms and the pastures with grey rocks projecting through the grass. And we ran through small white country towns, incredibly white and green and clean, that seemed to harbour no slums and no riches, only an all pervasive neat and tidy white-painted middle way. We alighted on the road outside the Walden Woods just between

the booths for EATS, COCA-COLA, and HOT DOGS, and the bathing and boating stages down by the water. We walked through the woods to the Pond and stood on the very spot where Thoreau had built his hut. There was no sign of his clearings or bean rows, but we were severely bitten by mosquitoes that I cannot remember Thoreau ever mentioning.

A pleasant evening sun shone over Concord when we drove in. It is bright with paint, like a Thames-side town. There is a lot of well-cut grass about the wide-spaced houses, and there stands Emerson's wooden house, a terribly respectable villa that looks much too new and spruce for Emerson ever to have lived in. Nathaniel Hawthorne's house is over the way, an interesting house to visit if you are shown over it, as we were, by Miss Lothrop, daughter of "Margaret Sidney" the authoress of *The Five Little Peppers*. The Wayside was bought by Hawthorne from the Alcotts; Louisa lived there, and you can see the little curved stairs on which the sisters played *Pilgrim's Progress* as described in *Little Women*. You see Hawthorne's turret study, the bedroom that Herman Melville slept in, a hiding hole for runaway slaves, and the pines that Hawthorne brought from England now wave over the roof. Nearby is the little meeting house in which the Transcendentalists held their debates.

We were very patient and went across to the other side of Concord to see the Old Manse, built by Emerson's grandfather, and in which Emerson wrote his famous essay *Nature*. It is an amusing warren of wooden rooms full of old books, old furniture, and the ghosts of famous old residents—Emerson's cultured grandmother who read Greek while she shelled the peas: Emerson himself, and Hawthorne, who lived the first four years of his married life there. From

its windows you look on the sluggish river Concord, at the bridge, where the farmers of Massachusetts met the British expedition from Boston, routed it, and started the War of Independence. What fun you could have in those days—these farmers chasing the British army down the road with a few shot guns, and old Mr. Emerson seeing it all from the Manse! At the farm across the road they show you a hole in the doorpost made by one of the bullets from the battle. The Stars and Stripes waves overhead, and as a Britisher you feel a trifle unsafe.

Turning to more cheerful and useful matters we were taken to eat at the Hartwell Farm, built in 1636, and now a country restaurant produced by Marion Fitch and Jane Poor, two clever ladies who uncovered a good deal of the ancient structure with their own hands, and collected period pieces and old boards from the district for furnishings and repairs. In an amusing booklet they tell the story of the farm and their own adventures with it, and something of their character may be gathered from the fact that lunch, tea, or dinner can be had at any old time of the day. We sat at a scrubbed deal table and studied the menu, a list of eighteen planned meals ranging from Chicken Soup, Toasted Cheese Sandwiches with Cold Slaw, and Ice Cream for eighty cents (about 3s. 2d.) to Fresh Fruit Cup and Chicken Soup, Fresh Killed Chicken fried in Butter or Tenderloin Steak, Brown Sugar Rolls, Ice Cream, Pie, and Waffles for two dollars fifty cents (about 10s.).

During our stay at Wellesley we were nourished at several such country restaurants. There is a plentiful supply of them; they appear at intervals along the roads, like gas stations, all full, especially on the maid's day out, and, whether cheap or elegant, new or old, all very well done. There must be mountains of fried chicken and ice cream

consumed in them by the quantities of happy-looking customers sitting in the dim amber lighting. There was only one distressing point in these restaurants—the way the waitresses say “all right” when you have given an order. “All right,” she sings, and I could never make up my mind whether she meant, “All right, don’t make such a fuss about it,” or “All right, you keep your hair on,” or “All right, if you will have that sort of thing I suppose I must get it,” or “All right, but it’s rather a bore.” These strange intonations and different uses of colloquialisms can be profoundly disturbing.

After little more than just shaking hands with this great part of the States we were in the train again, speeding back to New York, flowing smoothly through an undulating country of woodland, all green and gold with the new spring leaves.

IX

LOOKING ROUND NEW YORK

FOR the third time we entered New York, interested to see more of the city, and for further experience we went into a hotel in Washington Square.

The south side of the square, where Greenwich Village begins, was bustling with a crowd of people, and imagining crime or an accident we morbidly walked across, and—discovered Art! Everywhere we found pictures on the railings, on the steps, on the walks, an outbreak of pictures, like a rash, all over the south-west corner of the square, and the side streets running into the Italian quarter. There were not only pictures, but artists as well, boldly sponsoring their works, and sculptors making statues on the spot, and on the outskirts poets with single poems, or sheets and whole books of print, manuscript or typescript nailed to a hoarding—it was the annual Spring Outdoor Art Exhibition. In spite of having the initiative to thrust their work under the public nose, there was little originality in the paintings. Some must have come out of second-hand furniture shops; others must have been painted a very long time ago, and some were obviously the struggles of real students. One sculptor had some very presentable bronzes; there were some pleasant ordinary paintings of the New England coast, a surrealist construction of tinfoil, buttons, and shoe laces, and some wild social studies. Perhaps the best productions were by a caricaturist working under a placard, “Be Mur-

dered in Pastel for Half-a-buck!" As for the artists—well, they looked a murderous lot in apache-like garments. There were some sensitive-looking souls among them, but their paintings were none the better. There were over a hundred artists exhibiting, and it was moving—almost to the point of buying—to see the persistency of art under what must be very poor conditions.

Having an hour or so to spare we wandered off from the exhibition to look for Mulberry Street, to see if we could find that famous Papa Manteo and his Italian marionettes. Signor Manteo with the help of his family has for many years performed a puppet version of *Orlando Furioso*, a prodigious production that runs for a whole year with a different episode every night. But recently the theatre has closed for want of support, not for want of enthusiasm on the part of Papa Manteo who, it is said, would get so excited during the combats, which were frequent, that he often walked on the stage among the marionettes to lend a hand in the fighting. But we were disappointed. We did not find Papa Manteo; we only succeeded in losing ourselves among dark and gloomy streets, the dismal hinterland of any city, with here and there a silent bundle of rags settling down for the night on a doorstep.

We were in New York for a definite purpose—the English Speaking Union had invited the puppets to meet the members, give them a show, and have tea with them. The E.S.U. has its rooms in the new Rockefeller Center Building, and on the Sunday afternoon we arrived in a taxi beneath that magnificent towering shaft of seventy storeys with a fifty-mile view from its summit. We only wanted the modest fifteenth floor, but we had a suspicion that it would not be too simple to get there; it is the sort of thing you ought to do the day before.

"All ri'," sang the Italian Jewish taxi-man. "Le' me ta' care of this."

His inquiries started a very slick attendant on a series of mysterious movements. We watched him disappear and reappear by way of several doors, until he dashed up with some keys and motioned us across the road to a shuttered entrance, behind which he disappeared. He dashed out again in a few moments to explain that the shutter would not work, and persuaded the taxi-man to pull up on the sidewalk and wait.

"All ri'. Ah doan mine," and we waited until a policeman ordered him off the sidewalk into the road.

"All ri'. Ah doan mine," sang our driver again, and we upset the traffic in the roadway until the attendant returned with two companions who between them shifted the shutter and revealed a dark descending tunnel. Naturally the taxi-man moved forward, but immediately three uniformed arms rose and halted him. This entry was evidently a serious business.

"All ri'," the driver slurred philosophically, but as soon as the car stopped the three arms beckoned to him to advance, and with one attendant on the running board we passed under the veritable portcullis, sliding down the tunnel into the subterranean chambers of the mighty building.

The attendant was in a hurry, and the taxi had to go with him; we were suddenly left to find our own way. We searched for information or an elevator among intricate pillars, dim recesses, and inexplicable masses of concrete. We shouted into the muffled silence, and expected to be answered by the rattle of an automatic gun in this cinema scene. A terrible silence was the only response. The place was deserted—we were buried beneath seventy storeys of masonry! Presently a man walked across the scene, appear-

ing from nowhere ; he was remote and aloof, and with hardly a look at us indicated the direction of the elevator and passed away among the shadows. Following his vague wave we came upon half-a-dozen elevators, rang all the bells, and, just before we collapsed from the "jitters", were elevated to the fifteenth floor, to the delightful rooms of the E.S.U.

The puppets were introduced by Tony Sarg who was at one time famous in England for his cartoons in *The Sketch* and other weekly papers. He is the initiator, and now the leader of puppetry in the United States, and many of the younger practitioners have obtained their experience in one or other of his marionette companies. His productions began in New York ; he has built special productions for particular circumstances all over the States, and he now sends touring companies off on the road north, east, south and west. One of his latest shows is *The Mikado*, a full caste marionette production that, from photographs, looks so thorough that in future it should be quite unnecessary to engage a lot of bothersome actors and actresses for the play.

If I remember correctly Tony Sarg announced that there are some fifteen hundred professional puppet-shows in America, and an incalculable number of amateurs and educationists at work with them—a tremendous development from his initial efforts of twenty years ago. For the moment we added one more, and, of course, we found in the good audience other puppet workers, this time from the University of New York.

The show was over and we were packed, but a pass had to be specially written before we could leave the building. This time we were more fortunate in the subterranean chambers—we encountered two genial kitchen workers, and the puppets had the honour of riding on a truck of kitchen refuse to the loading platform. The portcullis clanged

behind us, and we rode through the streets, free men once more, and no longer little insects incarcerated in the cosmos of a seventy-storey building.

The sun enwrapped Washington Square in a temperature of eighty-five in the shade, and democracy sat about on the seats, smoking cigars, reading newspapers, or staring at the heat. We crept round the bus by the shadiest possible route, and went up Fifth Avenue because that was all we could think of doing for the moment. To us New York was a playground for a day or so, and we were looking for some cheap amusement and education that would be peculiarly New York, and not too hot. We clambered off the bus at the Rockefeller Center, and in company with a good many other rubbernecks and small cameras hung around the fountains and gardens between the French and British Buildings. The azaleas were bright in the sunken garden, and cool streams of water played over the impressive Prometheus Fountain. There was some strange fascination in walking round those gardens and pavements. The decorations were interesting—those stylised statues and panels over the great doors, the flat-carved bas-reliefs in a green transparent stone, clever, utterly sophisticated, and entirely appropriate to the circumstances. For another thing it is the last thing in New York—heaven alone knows what they will do next—but in these tallest, simplest buildings New York has expressed itself at last ; it has cleaned off all the false Gothic and Renaissance bits of decorations, and in these utterly severe lines and huge, naked planes has brought out the immensity and beauty of these giant buildings.

Having generated this enthusiasm at the base, it was impossible not to enter the elevator and mount to the top.

Flick—Flick—Flick—Flick. The register in the elevator flicked off the floors, just like that, and we pulled up at the sixty-fifth with only a slight stoppage in the ears. Another elevator took us to the promenade on the roof, and there was all the city below, the vast fifty-mile view stretching out over the enclosing rivers and the sea to a far away mistiness. It was all sunny and radiant, softened by a gentle haze, all the quantities of rectangular buildings rising in pretty tones of pale gold, and washed out rose, and chrome and grey—and all dwarfed from this superb height. Central Park was a tennis court; the hotel, where we had lived sensationally on the twentieth floor, was just nothing. The *Queen Mary* was in her berth—like a tiny steamer from a five cent store. In the streets below the pedestrians were moving specks without sign of action, and the cars were all penny toys. Looking against the sun one saw the towers around Wall Street, dark towers like a set of giant ninepins rising darkly against the misty light and the sea. As an idle tourist I could only look and wonder.

And yet, I doubt if all those crazy erections could stand up to one moment's serious thought. One is rude enough to hear rumours: in spite of being a visitor one listens unctiously to a whisper that some of them are not even half-full of tenants, and there are stories that leases are bought out and tenants enticed expensively from surrounding properties. And, as the inhabitant of a country with low buildings, I suppose one may be allowed to speculate as to what would happen if a brick got loose in a bottom corner of one of these towers. The *New Yorker* has already amused itself fiendishly by calculating, in terms of particular streets and stores, the exact horizontal reach of various buildings if they should topple over. I am assured that there is no earthly reason why they should fall—but, do you suppose

that I believe it? I have little doubt, from the point of view of a sane, sensible fellow who likes to grow his own taters and buy a new suit once in five years, that the inspiration behind these buildings is utter rubbish—just one more childish, incredible bit of nonsense about making some money.

Having travelled as high as we could vertically we dropped suddenly to the street, and looked for a bus that would take us a long way horizontally through the city. We talked to a man in the street about it, and he advised us to take the Elevated Railroad to the Bronx. Splendid idea! We climbed to the station above the street, slipped our nickels in the slot, and boarded an already full train that would take us any distance we required. The train was already full, but it filled up a good deal more as we stopped at each station. The collection of old iron and smutty paint roared and rattled its way through the hinterland of the richest city in the world, sunk between blocks of high tenements roasting in the sun, crowded ovens of concrete and brick for the torture of poor people. The streets were full of children playing, and adults sitting on steps, with an astonishing number of shiny cars lining the gutters. We looked into backyards planted with high poles that supported a series of clothes lines, one above the other, to correspond with the floors in the tenements.

On and on, with creak, rattle and bang. More small people crowded on to the train jamming us into an immovable mass—small Italians, small Jews, hundreds of small people, who, we discovered, were turning out *en fête*, the day being a Public Holiday! We were certainly seeing the life of New York at close quarters—my nose bobbed continually into the back hair of the man before me. 67th Street—73rd Street—120th Street, and so on until we got out at Bronx

Park, smutted and suffocated, and followed the crowd into the Botanical Gardens.

The gardens were beautiful, but very hot. Inert bodies reclined in every patch of shade. We thought of nothing—certainly not of botany—but to get into the shade ourselves and find a cool drink, which we did find at last outside the park in a tiny drug store with a very large radio. We had had enough of walking through eighty-eight in the shade, and we taxied to the Zoological Gardens. This was a tactical mistake—it was a free day—but at all events we saw the people of New York on holiday. It was all very orderly and domesticated, but a very thick jam of every nationality, colour, size and shape. All seats were occupied and the walks crammed with all the poppas and mommas of the city, shabby old men and spruce young men; shapeless old women and very trim young women; flash Negresses, and happy coloured men leading graceful young daughters tenderly about by the hand. Suddenly a shrill young voice cried, "Oh, look! There's a lart of animals!" and we remembered that we were in a zoo. But we could only see one animal, an immovable chimpanzee, reposing on its back, legs in air, and two little upside down eyes watching the passing throng.

Avoiding the Elevated we returned to civilisation by way of trams that took us through neat, but interminable suburbs very unexciting, until we transferred to a Fifth Avenue bus and passed through Harlem to see every seat occupied by a row of Negroes, black heads sticking out of windows, dusky groups at doorways, and the public garden full of playing piccaninnies. We passed under the magnificent buildings along Central Park, right down the Avenue to Washington Square at the end—and into a bath.

We had had hours of discomfort, but we had seen a lot

of New York—that ordinary, decent, work-a-day New York so buried behind the grand eccentrics that you hardly realise it exists until you see it in all its hordes. We were bewildered by the idea that New York is not representative. In the small encounters with odd people we found a good deal of anxiety as to what we thought of the country. A man would say, “Yes, but New York isn’t America. You ought to get out Middle West, *where I come from*, to see the real America.” We encountered a lady, resident in the city, who also implored us not to look upon New York as America. “You should see *my* part of the country—Westchester, with its beautiful tree-lined roads, and all the dogwoods. Oh, I hope you will go there—you certainly should—and the most lovely people!” And as further proof that New York contains some elements of the rest of the country there was the man on the tram: “You folks seeing New York? I’ll see it myself some day, I’ll say I will. Been here a few years, but hav’n’t had time to see it yet—just too bad! I’ve never seen Broadway by night. What, night clubs? Yessir! I’ve heard of them, but I guess they’re for guys like you. Wonder why I ever came here—seems you just got to get to New York if you can.”

In fact, New York is as much American as London is English—not that that is saying too much. It draws on the whole country for its replenishment, and in those modest, respectable suburbs there is many a porch with rocking chairs, and the drug stores of the avenues have their counterparts in the “wild and woolly West”.

Anyhow we liked New York, and we liked looking at it, and when a bold young man with cool and friendly intimacy stepped in our way, inviting us to join a sight-seeing tour, we were easy victims. It was Noel Coward, I think, who said in his reminiscences that he and his friends were so bored

in New York at one time that they were reduced to making one of these tours. But it is not so bad as all that ; if you are an absolute tyro it does help to get the map of the city in your mind, and in our particular guide we experienced a good dose of the cynical, piercing, New York humour.

We were inserted into a glass-roofed car with four other boobs—four very quiet and modest provincial ladies. The guide drove with one hand, and put the other before his mouth to throw his voice back to us—a quite extraordinary performance. We began to move, and were immediately hypnotised by the chanting guide commentating on the Wonders of New York. It was almost Walt Whitman—it might have been entitled, *I Chant the Big City*.

“Now we are on Broadway—The Great White Way.
 Passing down Broadway—known as The Great White Way.
 So called because its many lights make it as bright as day.
 This is the theatre section—passing the theatre section.
 Umteen legitimate theatres—umteen movie houses.
 Passing New York theatre section.

Into the centre of the clothing industry.
 On your right
 On your left
 Umteen workers, comprising the clothing industry.

Now we are at the city's most crowded crossing.
 Fifteen thousand cross here every day.
 Fifteen thousand
 Every
 Day.”

The guide's voice sank tragically, and so effectively that you could almost have sworn that he was listening to his own remarks, and in despair about all those people.

LOOKING ROUND NEW YORK

"Fifteen thousand—every day.
New York a good city to visit
But not to live in—as you will realise before this tour is
over.

Six months in New York to get a nervous breakdown—
Six years to recover elsewhere.
Not a good city
To live in.

On your left Martha Washington Hotel.
Hotel for women only.
Only male in the building is
The mail shute—
Martha Washington Hotel.

On your right the Rest and Change Hotel.
Known as Rest and Change
Because
Out of five dollars
You get fifty cents change,
And
The bell-boy gets the change—
The hotel gets the rest.

We are now at the Crossways of the World—
42nd and Broadway—
The Crossways of the World.
Largest New York store on your right—
Passing Macy's Store.
Four thousand
Five hundred
Employees—Macy's Store—on your right."

The guide seemed to have had enough of his own remarks
for a bit. We were held up by traffic lights—very neat

PUPPETS THROUGH AMERICA

and artistic, by the way—and turned a corner or two in silence.

“In a minute I shall turn to the left.

In turning to left look for Little Church Around the Corner.

Little Church—beloved by actors and show people—
Open day and night for marriages.

Big Church refused to bury actor—not respectable—

‘Take him to the little church around the corner,’ they said.

They did, and the Little Old Church Around the Corner buried the actor.

Now passing Little Church Around the Corner,
Beloved

By actors and show people.

Before you is the famous Flat Iron Building—

The first building to be called a Skyscraper.

Was a tall building—in those days,

But since then

We’ve removed the sky!

Look to your right and you will see

The World’s Tallest Building—The Empire State Building

World’s Tallest Building.”

The song was expressive, somehow. It was ecstatic, and then fell a little wearily, philosophically, as if you had better think twice about the W.T.B. Turning obediently we saw through the car window a plane of masonry and innumerable neat rectangular windows, and looking up through the glass roof we could see the rest of the pile shooting into the air like a stiff rocket.

LOOKING ROUND NEW YORK

“Look up to the top of the World’s Tallest Building,” sang the guide kindly to the infants in his charge, “but the company accepts no responsibility if you break your necks in doing so. It costs a dollar to climb that building and look down—may as well look up, and save that dollar. It is one thousand two hundred and fifty feet high; ten million bricks used in its construction; seven miles of elevator shafts—elevators rise at one thousand feet per minute.”

We ran on into the Bowery, and were invited to see how some people lived in the richest city in the world. At the back of a car-park was a line of crazy huts just hanging together, accumulations of odd boards and advertisement signs, looking like dog-kennels as they stood under a terrifying cliff of blank wall.

“On your right—how some people live in the richest city in the world.

Just huts—old soldiers in some of them.

Too proud to accept relief—

Too independent for schemes—

Just live in packing case houses

And pick up a living

As they can.

Look down these streets, left and right.

Life in the Bowery on your left and right.

Everyone in the streets,

Old and young, all out on the street—

Life in the Bowery to your left and right.”

After the Bowery we came into China Town, through which, it was explained, we were to walk so that we could see the streets, a theatre, the Temple of Joss, and a bazaar. “If you hear any shooting,” said the guide, “don’t run!

Just keep close to me, and if you see me running just you try to catch me." Literally this did not seem a " wisecrack " to make in a city that has its international problems, and because the Chinese have been falsely used and maligned as villains in cheap literature it is irritating to conserve the false idea. Before America gets through its horrid industrial and financial troubles—and its shooting by white people—it will have to learn a lot of philosophic stuff that has been a commonplace to China for a thousand years. We did not enjoy walking through China Town in a gang. The streets are interesting enough, and full of extraordinarily slight and slender Chinese looking very sensitive and quiet, and our guide covered his unfortunate wisecrack by saying that no Chinese in the quarter is allowed to go in want.

From China Town we passed into the Ghetto—" look left and right—all shops open on Sunday. Only one price in all these shops—the highest they can get." We passed out to the river quays, and round into Wall Street, the Grand Canyon of New York, where the Ghetto joke about prices is equally applicable.

It was about the last we saw of New York. We had not dined extravagantly in high company, visited a Strip-Tease Review or a Harlem night-club, or seen a Ball Game, but we had gotten the clean, sunny look of it in our minds, experienced its buoyant spirit, and realised that it contained quantities of intelligent, honest, very vigorous and unaffected beings.

FISHING CREEK VALLEY

THE low-slung, the lithe and lovely, the better-engineered, big, fast-stepping beauty, in fact, The Beauty of Detroit, picked us up, and headed westwards for the vacation house of a friend of a friend somewhere in the Pennsylvania Hills, about ninety miles away. Winifred and her friend and her friend had arranged all this, and I had nothing to do but sit back and wonder where the dickens we were going to, and if the friend of a friend would be a friend of her friend's friend.

I had an idea that the low-slung beauty was taking us through a lot of country, but nothing was significant until we drew up in a pleasant tree-shaded street somewhere, and entered a cool, eighteenth-century green-panelled restaurant. After the very good lunch we walked out into a typical American Main Street, and then suddenly turned into a covered market full of small stalls laden with fresh country produce, and made prosaic purchases of vegetables and dairy products from very neat Puritan-looking women wearing little white bonnets. Here and there we staggered in amazement past a farmer with long hair coming from under a large black hat, with a bushy beard, and dressed in sober grey garments that had no buttons. And there were a few boys and girls, exquisitely neat and tiny replicas of their parents. It was reminiscent of a Normandy market, but actually the town was Reading, in Berks county, too, less than a hundred miles west of New York. And the Puritan-looking stallholders were from the Pennsylvania Dutch farms in the

district, members of those Amish, or Menonite sects that settled in Pennsylvania two hundred years ago, and have bravely damned all the silly fashions since then, still conserving the manner of life of their German—not Dutch—great-grandparents. We saw more of them later, but for the moment we bought their excellent vegetables in awe, and went on towards that vacation house in the woods, sixty miles away.

I was not observant, but we passed Daniel Boone's old house, and then came to the Indian Gap among great wooded hills, and plunged completely into pioneer days by turning into the Fishing Creek Valley, a green valley of small, old farms lying serenely beneath the woods and the high hills. We turned from the winding road into the woods, mounted a hill, and drew up before the log-cabin of my youthful dreams, and in which we fell asleep, a hundred miles west of New York, and two hundred years away in time.

We awoke in the wooden bedroom with the air already heavy with the warm smell of pine trees, and we looked out, not to a forest of pines, but to mixed woods rising up a great hillside across the valley. We breakfasted on the wide porch behind sun blinds, while the ardent sun beat down on the cabin, filled the green leaves with glowing gold, and boiled the resin in the pines. The air sizzled with heat, and was tremulous with the strident creaking of innumerable crickets.

It was hot, and it grew hotter. We hardly dared move, and if we did move it was only in search of coolness. Winifred tried the porch, crept to shadowed trees, went round to the side of the house, and finally retired indoors, and spoke to no one. It was too hot to eat lunch—we drowsed—we flopped—the English were defeated by the Pennsylvania heat.

FISHING CREEK VALLEY

Luckily the weather varied, and growing more accustomed to the heat we lived to be fascinated by the log-cabin, the Fishing Creek Valley, and all the glorious country around. We idled in the cabin, which was mostly one delightful large room with a rugged stone hearth fire at either end. We idled on the porch which overlooked the hills and the woods ; through one locust tree we could see up the valley, and through the bushes we looked down to a winding stream. We were enclosed by a wealth of trees with no other habitation in sight, but, we were not alone. The mason bees were busy in the timbers, and wasps and hornets were constantly in need of being persuaded not to build in the porch. Ants, large black ants that could bite, made concerted attacks upon the house, only to be repulsed with a besom and thwarted with dreadful powders. There was always a turtle or two wandering in and out of the undergrowth in search of wild strawberries, and birds and squirrels were in the trees, with now and again a shy chipmunk. And in the evenings a whip-poor-will called melodiously as it searched the valley. Had we been there in winter wild deer would have come to our door.

In a corner of the garage was an ancient scythe, brought over by William Penn, I should think, a sickle, a whetstone, and a few other tools. It was not long before we were backwoodsmen, cutting down the undergrowth round the house to keep snakes away, and attacking colonies of that venomous plant, the poison-ivy which if touched can produce a painful rash, make its victim seriously ill, and develop blood-poisoning. It is reputed to be so clever that it is only necessary to touch an object that has been brushed by the plant to be infected. We even heard of a case of infection more extraordinary. A man, after having made a fire of poison-ivy and wandered about in its smoke, was greeted

by his daughter who flung her arms about his neck. A little later the painful rash developed on her arms and cheek, and it is supposed that the smoke had carried the poison to the man's coat and thence to the girl. Luckily neither smoke nor plant got hold of us, and as for Mr. Flickener, resident of the valley, he could pull the stuff up with his bare hands, and be entirely unaffected. And among those tools was an axe (not very sharp) that sufficed to thrill my blood with the pioneer spirit when, alone in the great woods, with blow upon blow, I felled, with my hands, four entire locust trees (not very big).

In that temperature a little of this sort of thing went a very long way, and it was easier to collect a dish of wild strawberries, or descend through the wood to the stream where it seemed cooler, and where we could watch heron fishing, and turtles hopping from the bank into the water, and admire the iris, or find a delicate flowering mountain laurel. We could wade across the stream and climb through the woods on the other side, steep woods of great trees, with old lumber tracks in them that seemed to go on for ever, or lead to a weird deserted house, that had belonged to some lonely farmer, or a woodman. This valley is not so prosperous as it was; the swift conveyance by air of produce from the South and West has made this land less profitable.

Or we could do nothing, but just sit, immersed in the warm woodland.

If the wood was a retreat from the world we were not without company. Early every morning a milk chariot arrived, and every other day the ice-man came with a ten cent block of necessary ice—without it our salads and vegetables would have wilted. That is the function of ice in the United States—to preserve food—and the use of ice in drinks is a decorative off-shoot. Several generations of

English people have considered the Americans almost a wicked race because they ice their water and other drinks, but I know a few English people who soon succumb to that wickedness when they get to the country.

After these visits we went down to the mail-box to meet the country postman who arrived in a car, and was ready to sell stamps and arrange any postal business we required. The mail-box is the curious construction that all country Americans put out on the road so that the postman can drive up, take out letters for despatch, and leave any for delivery. It is a long, narrow, metal box with a curved top supported on a post some four or five feet high. Every house has one—they go on, all along the roads, three thousand miles across the continent. Although all the same, they are not exactly regimented ; some are improvisations, and all are anomalies in the inclined-to-be-too-standardised America. Some posts wriggle and some are straight ; they lean at different angles, they are different heights, and different ages, in fact, it could almost be said that the mail-box is the one thing through which country Americans express their individuality. The only chance for the townspeople to express individuality is to go into the country and get a mail-box.

Then there was Mrs. Ternes, who came to clean up the house. She was the very counterpart of any stout, motherly country woman in England. Fishing Creek Valley was her world, *the* world, in fact, and to meet with her approval was to conform to valley standards. She was a bright light in The Grange, and, for all her sobriety, was not above “ acting crazy in costumes ”. We had long clear conversations with her, and were very surprised, after being there two weeks, when she remarked to our friends : “ I can understand the Wilkinsons very well, now. I’ve gotten used to their broken English! ”

We went in to see the Flickeners in their wooden cottage, and the old mother-in-law hailed us enthusiastically, and called to her daughter :

" Hey! Here's a playwright! Come and look—here's a real playwright! That's what we country jakes don't see every day! "

I certainly blushed as I thought of the half-dozen puppet plays I had constructed, but I did not contradict her, and we went on to describe a yellow-breasted bird that had puzzled us by clinging to our windows and pecking furiously at the glass.

" Hey! You've gotten our love birds! " exclaimed the old lady. " We didn't put up our nest-box this year, and they must have gone up to you. Love birds I call 'em, because the old man used to stand and look down on his missis on the nest, and teet-teet-teet to her, and nod his head—so I call 'em love birds. You gotten our love birds. Crested fly-catcher is their real name. You come in anytime and I'll be glad to talk about the birds. Mrs. Alexander is my name—after Alexander the Great. "

The four ladies who worked a farm in their odd time had us out to dine at their farm, which was in a subsidiary glen known as Potato Valley. It was altogether a remarkable evening. They had bought the farm in a state of decline. It had been a simple place, and you can guess its standard by the fact that the young ladies from the city, what with baths and scrubblings, had emptied the well, the only water supply, in the first week. Now all that had been changed, with an efficiency that made you look at these four young women in terror. A muck yard had been reconstructed into a large grassy terrace by those fair but awful hands. A large plantation of young decorative trees had been set. There were large, neat acres of carefully tended vegetables

and corn, and there were stacks of bottled vegetables, pickles, and preserves from last season's crops. They had not only done this, but carried it out to the last point of cleanliness and order. There must be something the matter with American women. The interior of the house was as bad, just one spotless glimmer of white paint, and they dished us a meal of their own products that was the last word in delectable cookery.

The only difficulty was the weather. Ah! If only those four Amazons could have got their hands on that! The fact is a thunderstorm was imminent, and we were dissolving disgustingly in invisible steam. Then the storm broke, and while the electric light went up and down, and the lightning took its place, a fantastic amount of water splashed around that farm in the fields. It was a very violent end to the world, made all the more fantastic by sitting in a spotless room, at one moment dark and the next light, conversing with four spotless ladies, one of whom had been up since five in the morning, had hoed a few rows of Indian corn, carried through a day's work elsewhere, and was now speaking, quite justifiably, in a decided drawl with words that seemed to have "larst a lart of carnsnants", and gone to extremes in American pronunciation. It was delightful—it was terrifying, but we came away, after traversing a new-made lake, with a very vivid impression of the astonishing vigour and energy of American thunderstorms and ladies.

And then there was the retired schoolmistress with an invalid husband, who also cultivated a farm. She showed us her strawberry beds, and invited us to help ourselves. We thought it would be more to the point if we offered to help in the real harvesting :

"No, no! Folks often offer to help pick my strawberries.

I appreciate their thoughtfulness, but I just say NO! I got my own way of picking strawberries."

And her own way of growing them, too, for when the government inspector came to grade them, they would not pass through the biggest hole in his grading apparatus! This lady's habitual rising hour is four o'clock—but, not on Sundays :

"I just tell folks that Sunday's my day for sleepin', and I ain't going to be disturbed till six!" Of such stuff are the valley folk made.

And there were the delightful evenings and week-ends when our hostess, Margaret Moss, would return from Bryn Mawr and Philadelphia, and her friend, Elizabeth Shipley, would drive into the wood from Pittsburg or from somewhere a hundred miles or so away. These two ladies are very important in the picture of America because they represent the many cultured, travelled and experienced women who devote themselves to weaving the fabric of American social life. They both work very hard in official state positions, not from economic necessity, but compelled by conscience and sheer kind feelings to do something about the relief of destitution and the proper guidance of young delinquents. Do not imagine a couple of starchy moralists mouthing ready-made tags of philosophy, or modern, hard professionals knocking off the job callously. They are very sensitive, live women first, and all the time. They are educated women with dignified characters and broad minds, who are perpetually churning over their knowledge and experience, re-assessing their conclusions, falling into despair or leaping with hope, or almost deciding to leave society to its devilry and amuse themselves with the arts and with woodcraft at the log-cabin. They deal with the simplicity of country folk far more removed from city life than English country

FISHING CREEK VALLEY

people ; they step in between sophisticated strikers and die-hard employers ; they steer through political intrigue ; they bring dirty young criminals out into the sunlight, and they remain gracious and sensitive women, infinitely kind and un-embittered, without a hint of affectation or cant.

We would hear a car mounting the hill through the wood ; it would draw up under the pines, and Margaret Moss would get out, slam up the lid of the boot, grab a number of parcels—among them bottles of beer for me—sniff the pines, take a long look up her beloved valley, and then dispose of the parcels in their *proper places*. Then the city lady would disappear ; there would be great splashings of water and slamming of doors, and a figure in a neat white linen knicker suit would get down into a chair on the porch and swear never to leave the woods again. Rested, the figure would turn indoors, pull out a violin case and a music stand, press Winifred into service as accompanist, and the log-cabin and all the woods would fall under the spell of sarabandes, giguees and musettes.

Another car would arrive, and this time Elizabeth Shipley would appear, with more parcels—that, probably, would get into the *wrong places*. Again the city lady would disappear, and another neat white linen figure would repose on the porch, and, rested, would begin to unfold her private mail which she had not had time to read for several days. You would be asked to help decipher a scrawl in French, or you would get the latest news from Germany, or Holland, or somewhere because Elizabeth Shipley has intimate friends all over Europe, and their present-day problems and her anxiety for them are her hobbies. Americans are very well informed as to European affairs, and you wince a little at times when you find that Great Britain is just another country in their eyes. But they know where it is ; they

know where all the European countries are, and if they have not lived in them, they have encountered representatives in the United States. You do not find many present-day Americans thinking it humorous to be ignorant of the whereabouts of Poland, or Yugo-Slavia, or Czechoslovakia, or dismissing them because they have a "funny name". Presently the music, the correspondence, and activities in the kitchen would resolve into a meal on the porch, and good talk as the fireflies began their dance over the rough grass before the house.

Down in the middle of the valley by the main-road was an old shanty that had once been a Sunday School, and we had arranged to give a puppet performance in it. How long the room had been there nobody seemed to know, but when we were setting up the theatre we found some forgotten, dusty little books on top of a cupboard. Naturally we stole one as a souvenir, and found an inscription on the fly-leaf dated 1864. The title is : *Scenes of Intemperance, Exhibited in Familiar Conversations between A Mother and Her Children*, and the conversations run like this :

JAMES. What house is that, mother?

MOTHER. It is a tavern ; do you not see the sign by the door?

LUCY. What is the man doing there, mother?

MOTHER. He is drinking, my child. Do you not see the glass at his mouth? Look how he reels and staggers. He is already drunk, and drinking more!

JANE. Has this man any children, mother?

MOTHER. Look on the other picture, and you will see one in the cradle, and three more in the bed.

JANE. Oh, what a cruel man this was, to leave his wife and children so, and spend his nights with drunkards at a tavern!

FISHING CREEK VALLEY

No wonder the valley folk have character ; from these pathetic little books with their elegant engravings they had evidently received a moral education.

The old Sunday School filled up in the usual country way. We could not start at the precise hour because on looking round the house it was discovered that Mrs. So-and-so had not arrived yet, and that we could not start until Mr. Sweigart had come. He was probably carrying a load of wood and would not have finished yet, and Mrs. So-and-so was probably delayed by having to pack up a few baskets of strawberries for a customer. In a few minutes a loud whisper informed us that Mr. Sweigart had come, and that someone had gone to hurry up Mrs. So-and-so. It was an interesting audience of buxom country women, hard old men with knobbly bald heads, a collection of volatile boys, and a sprinkling of the quality from Harrisburg, and one party enthusiastic enough to have travelled from Reading, sixty miles away.

A final survey decided that the valley was assembled ; we started up, and soon found that we were in for a swinging show, that we had a buoyant audience, warm and alive to every point, full of easy laughter and generous applause. We did our best, and I know I distinguished myself by holding up a scene to make the puppets play with numbers of large white moths that fluttered round the light. There were, once again, puppeteers in the audience, some young ladies from Harrisburg who had used a puppet theatre for a costume study, performing the same pierrot play dressed in three different periods. There were many compliments and gracious thanks, summed up in Flickener's remark : " And that's a thing you don't learn to do overnight! "

We packed up while the audience started up their cars and dispersed to their valley homes. And what a night!

PUPPETS THROUGH AMERICA

The moon was over the valley and the dim hills, and the warm luminous night was gently alive with quietly rustling trees, with chirping crickets and the clear piping of the whip-poor-wills. And the fireflies! Low over the fields was suspended the silent ballet, the gliding dance in perpetual motion of the countless little winking lights.

GOING PLACES

WE were not entirely immersed in the hot and bucolic valley, for now and again our friends whisked us away from the trees to explore the country around, and in the draught generated by the moving car we cooled off, and felt that the invention of that terrible disease the automobile was almost justified.

At the valley end, a mile away, flows the broad, shallow Susquehanna river, and one evening we pursued the winding road along its bank, a lovely road winding with the river into the hills and among the rolling farmlands of green growth and purple earth.

It was a busy road at first until we reached the Amity Hall Inn, an old canal inn that had been used by generations of canal-boat workers but now an elegant country restaurant and a living museum of old American furnishings. You sit on graceful antiques, and feed from elegant old tables, and you go upstairs to see the rooms you might stay in, old-world rooms with genuine four-poster beds, and truckle beds, and all the good wooden furniture reposing in the discreet patina of age. Pathetic pictures hang on the walls—classic engravings of Indians bursting into a settler's house, old portraits of Washington, two dismal young women clinging to each other entitled *The Daughters of Temperance*, and coloured prints of moustached revolutionary soldiers farewelling their girls. It is a very pleasant restaurant standing under the trees at a cross-roads.

After Amity Hall the road was deserted, and our low-slung beauty purred gently through the everchanging country, the river of the lovely Indian name, seen through feathery locust trees, always at our side. We turned from the road, bumped over a track through the fields, and came down to a settlement on the river bank, a wooden house, and an old mill standing in a grove of old, leaning trees, with a ramshackle ferry moored to the river bank. The next minute one expected to come on Huckleberry Finn. A rather more elderly Huck came out of the house and motioned us silently to the ferry. He was a taciturn old fellow, performing his tasks methodically, and with little to say but "Yes, ma'am". The home-made looking engine was started up and a large rickety old paddle wheel at the stern began to revolve. The ferry moved, and we slowly floated out on the broad, swift-running waters of the Susquehanna, moving slowly and delightfully like an old Showboat, while a blazing sunset over the hills turned the water to a river of gold. Half-way across the sun and the river turned to a deep crimson, and we arrived at the opposite bank in a shimmering grey. In a quarter of an hour as well as crossing the river we had passed from day to night.

We moved off the ferry into Millersburg, a little, river town of white painted houses buried in trees. The streets were bright with the neon lights, and full of townspeople, dressed in white, walking the sidewalks, or sitting in the tree-planted square round the statue of the revolutionary soldier. A neat, warm, bright little country town alive with a continental sociability in its streets. We rode home in the dark, now on the river bank, now climbing high, and overlooking the dim water and the nestled house-lights under the hills—on through the warm night and this very lovely Susquehanna country.

In the opposite direction the river flowed through Harrisburg, seven miles from the woods. Harrisburg meant nothing to us. It was simply the name of a vulgar person with a slang word for town attached, and we went there to shop. Of course it was a most nasty shock to our prejudices. "Some road this," sang Flickener, and we agreed as he drove us in between the villa and gardens and the long river-front planted with grass and trees, and the shining river flowing by the hills and under four immensely long bridges. The town was busy and bright; we shopped in very good shops to the constant tune of "Thanks a lot—come again," and all the time we had half an eye on an immense pile of buildings surmounted by a green dome. Winifred went off on business of her own, and I meandered off to explore.

I had been told that Harrisburg was the capital of Pennsylvania, a state almost as big as England, containing Philadelphia and Pittsburg, rich in iron, coal, and petrol, and with nearly ten million inhabitants. It is not surprising therefore that the capital of such a state should be "some town". I should have known, and I apologise for my insulting ignorance. The handsome erection with the green dome turned out to be the Capitol, surrounded by state government buildings, and gardens that lead out magnificently to one of the bridges. Going into the Capitol I was lost in and overwhelmed by its magnificence. Its particulars escape me, but there was the dignified Senate room with famous Abbey paintings, and quantities of gold knobs; in the Supreme Court were more gold knobs, and panels painted by Violet Oakley depicting the Quaker ideal of Justice; in the Legislature, more Quaker panels, and more gold knobs; another room had a gold ceiling—there was Carrara marble and Connemara marble, and delightful brown tiles in the vestibule, and still more panels by Violet

Oakley, setting out the life of William Penn, as is befitting to the Capitol of the Quaker state.

I walked down the marble steps completely stunned by this exhibition of the might, wealth and magnificence of just one American state, so stunned that I was not quite sure of the hairdresser's salon at which I was to meet Winifred. I knew the street and waited about, but no Winifred was to be seen. I penetrated the suspected salon, but they had not got my wife there. Irene's Parlour was also the wrong one, and in Minna's I was equally unsuccessful. This was a come-down from the Capitol, and I did not like penetrating these parlours full of women with their heads cased in weird machines. If I have a comb I am tolerably happy, and with a brush *and* a comb, completely satisfied. But these metal domes and electric wires—"No, sir—nobody of that name here!" That was Lucille's, and I went up and down stairs, and in and out of parlours until, ultimately, Winifred came out of the most unlikely building in the street—but it had been a beauty parlour all right. I apologised, but the Capitol was the real culprit.

Another day our hostess said, "Let us go somewhere. I feel you ought to see Baltimore—it's not far. We can get there comfortably."

We lunched in Baltimore. I can remember how hot it was, and have an impression of some large solid houses, like Kensington mansions, in fact, the car was parked outside a Ladies' Club of some kind, but being at Baltimore, naturally, it would be a pity not to see Washington, since it was only forty miles farther on. By this time our driver was getting her hand in, and we covered the forty miles in about half an hour. It was hotter still in Washington, and thanks to losing the way we saw the coloured quarter, some very bright residential streets with strings of shiny cars

parked in the gutters, and also the enormous government buildings, a handsome array of architected and sculptured stone, and we skimmed through the preparations for a Scout Jamboree in the park. I must apologise for this cursory treatment of the capital of the United States, but, you see, being in Washington, and Mount Vernon only twenty miles farther on, and our driver's hand being on the wheel, we might just as well go on and see Washington's home. Why, yes, of course! Burr-r-r-r-r, and we were at Mount Vernon—where it was hotter than ever.

We walked round the white house on the green hill that had been Washington's home. It was a lovely pitch for a house on this rising ground over the wide river Potomac, with groups of graceful trees posing on grassy knolls, and the long, hot view down the water that is like a great lake. The pretty house built of wood is a series of small, elegant eighteenth-century rooms, exquisite, but very modest for so great a man. And slightly apart is the country kitchen with a large cottage cauldron hanging over the open fire, and bunches of herbs in the rafters. There is also a row of little huts which had housed the slaves, very small; we would have given a great deal to have seen it in its own century—the Uncle Tom's Cabin sort of life playing itself out on the banks of the Potomac. It was a magic hour to walk there in the gardens and the burning sun, and if we did not see Baltimore, and only circled round the White House in Washington, the three hundred mile drive had given us a new vision.

Much to our regret our hostess was driving to Pittsburg on business for a few days, and we could not go. She was seated in the car ready to start when this Pennsylvania air got into all our minds, and we decided to accompany her

part of the way and return, as we could, the next day. She was already behind time, and so you might have seen us grabbing some clothes and a bag, rushing back to the car, and, as it ran the first mile or so, dressing, converting ourselves from woodland nymphs into respectabilities. The object of the trip was to see the mountains over which the road passed, but as it was dark by the time we reached Harrisburg it did not seem an altogether sensible inspiration.

And yet it had its charm as we ate up the miles of lonely darkness, and if we could not see the mountains we felt that we were climbing them, and could sense the height, and the deep woods through which we passed. The drive had its little incidents. Now and again we seemed to be hovering in the sky as we suddenly looked down on far-away village lights ; we disturbed a wild deer by the roadside and saw it bound into the bushes, and we came back to earth as we passed through the bright little towns of Carlisle and Chambersburg. At Bedford we stopped, and decided to try tourist rooms for the night in a private house. Numbers of houses along all the roads hang out signs to catch travellers. In general you get a respectable room and a bath for a dollar.

We booked seats to return by 'bus, and the vehicle, which was coming from the other side of the globe, was late. We waited in the Bedford street while America rode by in Fords, Plymouths, Chevrolets, Oldsmobiles, Buicks and Packards, all new and shiny, but containing a variety of travellers—ladies, commercial travellers, families with quantities of luggage, coatless and begrimed labourers, a cargo of Negroes, more ladies, and young men in sporting cars and sleeveless shirts. We only saw one old car, an early Ford masterpiece, high in the leg, battered, and covered with hayseed, driven by a modest farmer accompanied by a modest daughter, the country girl of last century, in a pink cotton

dress. At the corner of the street stood the policeman, a grim, slouching figure in a rough grey shirt and knickers, with a revolver and a cartridge belt. He shot no one, but he smoked a lot of cigarettes. Near us was a hitch-hiker thumbing for a lift ; as a car came along he stepped out a pace, and thrust his thumb in the direction of Pittsburg, and then he took a pace to the rear. Nobody picked him up while we were there. Citizens in white, or shirt and trousers strolled by in the heat ; there was the scent of cigars, and once there wandered across the scene an unbelievable pair of aged Negroes in neat, black garments, their kind, simple faces alive and mobile with earnest talk. We enjoyed Bedford as we waited for the 'bus.

This road from Bedford to Harrisburg does not look much on the map, just a few inches of red line passing through Carlisle and Chambersburg, but it soon takes you into fine, hilly country by a road under a rocky cliff with a rushing, rocky stream below you. It climbs over several ridges, rising to a couple of thousand feet, and you look down on lovely vistas of Pennsylvania, great, radiant views over the lesser hills variegated with red ploughlands, light green crops, and pastures silvered profusely with moon daisies. And there are expanses of woodland in which the wild deer roam, and are hunted. It is seventy miles of lovely country something like England, only sunnier, not quite the lesser Switzerland, and a bit different from Germany, although many of the wooden houses have balconies and are probably German in origin. The inspired dash to Bedford had not been so ridiculous, after all, and those two or three inches of Pennsylvania road had revealed wonders.

In America there seems to be only one footpath. The cottage to cottage, over the stile and across the meadows sort

of thing is not there ; but there is one footpath. If you walk on it you are advised to take a few days' rations of food, a first-aid outfit with remedies against snake-bite, and a compass. It is the Appalachian Trail, beginning in Maine or Vermont, following the Alleghany Mountains down to Mississippi—some three thousand miles of rough track over mountains and valleys that has been cleared, and marked, and maintained by amateur outdoor clubs all along its route. It runs along the highest ridge of the Blue Mountains above Fishing Creek Valley, and one day we struck the Trail, following the rocky path through the forest, with flowering Solomon seals and laurels to decorate the undergrowth, climbing, until we reached a summit, and could look down on our valley, small and rarefied by distance, a tiny spot on the huge map of America, but which had become an interesting and lovely little world to us. If you are inclined to think that the United States are bung full of nasality and dollars, go—walk the Appalachian Trail, and lose your superciliousness in all those mountains, lakes and streams—in all those leaves and loveliness.

XII

TO CINCINNATI BY ROAD

THIS business of introducing my puppets to the American puppets was a long-standing joke. For many years I had corresponded with the famous publicist of American puppetry, Paul McPharlin, and occasionally the ridiculous idea of taking such a small show to such a large country had been lightly touched upon, but now—it was coming true. The annual festival at Cincinnati had invited us as guests of honour, to give a performance, and to see performances of American puppets. The personnel of the conference was a mystery to us. Paul McPharlin I thought I knew from correspondence, but he turned out to be twice as tall as I expected. The organisers for the year were Martin and Olga Stevens who, when I wrote, fearing that the great floods at Cincinnati might have disorganised the Festival, replied in this vigorous fashion :

“ And of *course* there'll be the Festival. Floods? Shucks—we just take floods in our stride. Fortunately for our personal affairs, we just missed the floods everywhere we went, altho we were running up and down the Mississippi country during the worst of it. The muddy water lapped our wheels a couple of times, and several times they had driven stakes along the edge of the highway to indicate where the road stopped and the fields began, but for that everything was fine. The only effect the flood had on our festival was that construction on the new wing of the Cincinnati Art Museum was held up, and now we shan't get to use their new audi-

torium as we had planned, but that is a minor matter. The Art Museum will still be headquarters, and there will be a month-long exhibit of puppets prior to the Festival week."

That was obviously the right spirit, and very efficiently these organisers had arranged for us to be picked up at Harrisburg and conveyed by road to the festival by two delegates, Miss Wieand and Miss Hageman. That was all very well, but who were Miss Wieand and Miss Hageman? From Harrisburg to Cincinnati is five hundred and forty miles, two days' journey, and the prospect of two days' incarceration in a car with Miss Wieand and Miss Hageman was—well, they might be frightful people! You know what America is, dear reader. They might bump us off! Two days is a long time in which to remain polite, and if Miss Wieand and Miss Hageman insisted upon getting tipsy—what were we to do? Say thank you very much, all the time?

We waited, trembling, while it occurred to us that the ladies might have entertained similar fears with regard to us, and decided not to come. However, the car drove up to the log cabin, the two ladies descended, and we all bristled up, introduced ourselves, and stared at each other like four fighting cats. We were very polite—you should have seen me, the perfect gentleman, offering to arrange the bags which Miss Wieand had already done—and we started off for Cincinnati, sad at leaving the valley and our friends, and weighed down with forebodings as to the particular form of unpleasantness that Miss Wieand and Miss Hageman would inflict upon us.

By the time we had reached Bedford all was well—it turned out that Miss Wieand had been brought up in the vicarage there! We bought the young ladies a box of

chocolates, and settled back in our seats. As a matter of fact they were charming in every way, shared their pretzels and college songs with us, could converse about anything, and even asked us to oblige with a song or two.

On—on—on over the everlasting green and wooded hills of Pennsylvania, mounting the sides of valleys, penetrating leafy woods, gliding through the farmlands, dotted with wooden houses, and wooden barns with ventilating spires that made them look as respectable as chapels; through wooden villages and towns, with porches and rocking chairs all the way; the road winds, rises and falls, and by us flashed the rich gold fields of wheat, the fields of the green torches of Indian corn.

The way was rural and a matter of great landscape, but, it was a highway. The traffic was not great; we met and overtook private vehicles in comfortable proportions, and occasionally encountered lorries—trucks, in American—and a few of those chariots piled with four new cars; a cross-country passenger coach was a rarity. Our drivers were careful, changing every fifty miles, and we kept under fifty miles an hour. The gas stations were frequent, mostly very bright and attractive, with a good restaurant attached, or at least a bar with sandwiches, ice-cream, the inevitable coca-cola, and that herbal medicine which has become a national sport in the States—root beer. And the garage men were dignified and attentive, never horribly subservient, and full of useful information imparted with a quiet and attractive familiarity. As we approached any particular beauty spot we were warned always by a series of placards along the highway, and climbing a long hill we passed this sort of thing: BILL'S PLACE—ON TOP. STOP LOOK, AND EAT—ON TOP. WE ARCHITECT APPETITES—ON TOP. O WOW! COUNTRY HAM

—ON TOP. BOY! CHICKEN DINNERS—ON TOP. You expected the worst of Bill's Place, but probably you were wrong, and it would turn out to be a discreet restaurant, all windows and white paint, in a pleasant garden, very clean and efficient.

One feature of this road travel is the hitch-hiker, the poor fellow without a car, the often shabby, *outré* figure with a battered bag, who stands at the roadside sticking a thumb in the direction he wants to travel. We passed a good many, but our car was full. We have friends, and maiden ladies, too, who frequently give a poor devil a lift, and have not regretted it—yet. This hitch-hiking has become a sport among college students; they make a vacation at it, take trips to New York, and seek to break the record by crossing the continent in the shortest number of lifts and time. One student is organising an association, with a periodical, to prescribe a code of ethics for those who "thumb it". The movement has already evolved its own language and technique, and you look for a "spot", not a place to stand in; it is considered a mistake to wear a hat, or carry a bag too ornate with hotel labels. When you are "swinging the duke" one lift is called a "hop", and a lift with a meal thrown in is a "prince hop". Naturally the hitch-hikers have become more critical than grateful. They have developed discrimination, and loathe a slow driver, calling him a "doze", and dislike reckless drivers who are "cracks". What they prefer, and presumably the coming organisation will require all cars to be so marked, is a nice warm sedan with a radio. Salesmen are considered the most generous and satisfactory victims; middle-aged men are too cautious to pick up strangers, and the elderly are too sympathetic and ask too many questions.

The United States have evolved many degrees of expendi-

ture for road travellers which it seems possible to indulge in without stigma or falling under the shadow of snobbery. For instance, at any good-sized hotel you can be luxurious and eat in the restaurant, or, if you are hard up, or in a hurry, there is a cafeteria where you can help yourself quickly and inexpensively. You need not stay in a hotel, for most of the respectable little villas along the road, seeking pin money, hang out a board offering a room and bath for a dollar. In the country are tourist cabins, which vary considerably, from shaky-looking hutches behind a gas station, to discreet and pleasant cabins set off the road among trees and grass, and varying in price from fifty cents to two and a half dollars. Some of these are regular cabin hotels, well designed with baths and lavatories, where for a couple of dollars you get a garage and bath, a cabin with two double beds and a cooking stove, with the milkman and tradespeople calling in the morning. And in all the National Parks camping grounds are set apart for tents, and for picnics there are seats and tables and large open fires for cooking. A family, travelling in their own car, could get across the country very pleasantly, and probably for less money than they would spend in their homes.

Occasionally we passed a trailer, or a group of trailers parked under the trees in the country, or assembled methodically like a little town outside a real town. There is a vast travelling population on the roads in the United States, that threatens to become a nation in itself, a new race of gypsies, that numbers millions, literally, and which lives permanently in trailers making a living at every possible trade and profession. It is becoming a national problem, and there are theorists, designing four-room trailers, who see no reason why the whole population of America should not live on the road, and think that the majority will in a few years' time!

Meanwhile we had been travelling on, coming to Cumberland where the hills are higher and the valleys deeper, and that is past ; we cross into Maryland, and after seventy miles more of the hills we are in West Virginia, rolling through the glorious Potomac Deer Park with still bigger and wider hills, and at about six o'clock we drew up at a lonely inn among the forests, three thousand feet above sea-level.

After the supper we descended a wild ravine, passed a snake farm, and rolled into Grafton to look for beds, but Grafton was our first unpleasant town, an unpainted, grubby, noisy railway town between the railroad and the hill. It was almost as unpleasant as one of our English industrial towns, and we returned to the village of Blueville, and took tourist rooms at a dollar each.

"Pretty warm day," sang the landlady, and showed us into the house that was like an oven. We hardly dared to move, but we got to bed with the idea, I think, of going to sleep. But what a night! It wanted a week of Independence Day, but this did not mean that the celebratory fireworks were not being exploded. The night was a bombardment ; our room was now a vivid green, and now a vivid red, and the splendid explosions maintained us in a state of British consciousness the whole night long. When the fireworks ceased the lorries began roaring by on the road, and the heat was with us all the time. A very poor dollar's worth of night!

The sun was radiant on Blueville when we walked across the road to the gas station for breakfast. It was summer *in excelsis*, the warm dusty smell of summer was in the sunny air, and lightly clad we moved with restraint. A cheerful garage boy served us boisterously with a good breakfast, and, with the woodwork of the car already too hot to touch

by hand, we started off to complete the remaining three hundred miles to Cincinnati before night.

The country was a little less wooded, and the hills not so high ; the derricks of oil wells began to stand out in odd places, and in cottage gardens were little standing lamps burning eternally from tapplings of the natural gas in the mysterious earth beneath. There were hollyhocks in the gardens, as well, and the ivory white flowers of the tropical-looking yucca plant. On, and on, up and down the hills of West Virginia, a poorer-looking country than Pennsylvania, through places like Pruntyville, Clarksburg, Buckeye and Salem, until we reached St. Marys and crossed the Ohio, running along the river through the country that had been badly flooded, until we came to Marietta, and ran on another fifty miles to lunch in Athens. The restaurant was buried in catalpas, a cool green retreat from the burning sun, and we lunched among dignified Sunday families, beautifully and gaily dressed, with the large catalpa leaves crowding against the windows.

In Ohio the hills began to dwindle, and the road tended to straighten itself out, and to be seen for a mile or so at a stretch. But it was still pretty country ; there were still the wooded hills, and varying fields of green Indian corn and the golden wheat, with hay and pasture and fallows. Cows, horses, and odd sheep were in the fields that were often crowded with marguerites, and the verges and waste clumps were glorious with viper's bugloss, the yellow calliopsis radiant in the sun, and masses of tiger lilies.

At fifty miles from Cincinnati there was a discussion about stopping for the night, but we went on, were soon creeping through the flourishing, outlying suburbs, and came into the city by a wealth of parks, an architected hill jutting over a wide river, and a hazy hot-looking city spread

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out under a hill—a real city, handsome, composed, and obviously with a character of its own. But I could have sworn that the floor of the Gibson Hotel was sloping and undulating with movement. Over five hundred miles of motoring in two days had reduced our legs to water.

XIII

PUPPET FESTIVAL

THE Festival had shifted from the Art Museum to the Hotel Gibson, which is in the centre of Cincinnati, a thousand-room affair comprising a series of exceedingly smart and well-decorated restaurants, tea-rooms, cafes, cafeterias, bars and a Rathskellar. It was full of very trim men and women—business-looking people—quietly and intensely following their business. The American business men and women are naked professionals. They do not seem to operate by a deceptive veneer of drinks, little card parties, and funny stories, but you feel their heads to be dancing with statistics and neat theories, involving questions like turning your disabilities to assets, capitalising your psychosis, profiting by genuine service, or being evolution-conscious and preparing to sell the public what it should historically develop into wanting to buy next week.

As puppet showmen we felt a little lost, but the Festival committee came to the rescue and led us off to the magnificent, gilded and mirrored ballroom in which the puppeteers were to sport for the next four days. It looked delightful, the handsome room with a stage, pictures on screens, and the long buffet table through the arches gaudy with gay puppets. We were given identification labels to wear ; there were introductions and enthusiastic greetings all round, and we met Paul McPharlin with all his height, and Stevens with an Elizabethan beard—we were at the second annual American Puppetry Festival.

Rumours of American puppetry had come my way, but, of course, they were difficult to realise across all those miles of Atlantic Ocean, and I soon came to the conclusion that four days at the Festival would hardly give me an exact knowledge of the movement. Examination of the designs, photographs, press-cuttings and advertisements, and also a survey of the exhibited puppets on the buffet table was a shock. We steered round behind some pillars, skirted Paul McPharlin, Stevens and the committee, and went off for a quiet lunch. Terrible things had met our eyes.

"... Since 1923 the many companies flying the Tatterman banner have given more than 24,000 performances to about 10,000,000 persons. . . ."

Considering that I possibly show to about 25,000 persons in the year, I calculated that to catch up with the American scale of operations I would have to live just 400 years. It was devastating. Ringing names stood out from the accounts of productions—Faust, Shakespeare, Aristophanes. *Oedipus Rex* was there, for orchestra and chorus, *Emperor Jones*, *Peer Gynt* and *Don Quixote* with the puppets three feet high, and the personages of the Don, his squire and the showman all over life size. And there was a whole string of names of producers from New York to California, serious producers with years of hard work and scores of major productions to their credit. It would be necessary to start up a system of card indexing and filing to keep up sides with all this. It was terrible—there was a scale drawing of a marionette with the centre of gravity calculated mathematically and placed in exactly the right position to give proper poise and balance to the figure. Ye Gods! Has it come to this!—the puppetry that some of us were doing a few years ago on a kitchen table or over a chair-back.

In the evening the two hundred of us met at a banquet in

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the roof garden, two hundred delegates from all over the States, and a few from Canada, charming ladies and clever gentlemen, all interested professionally or as amateurs or educationists in the Art of the Puppet Theatre. We made speeches, and then descended to the ballroom where we were augmented by an outside audience, and Martin and Olga Stevens played for the first time a drama for marionettes, *Joan of Arc*, by Clem D. Easly, in two acts and eight scenes. This is the third adult play written by Easly for the Martin Marionettes, the others being *The Passion Play* and *The Nativity*, both having been played with great acclaim.

The marionettes were naturalistic, very well made and dressed, and for two hours they held the audience in thrall, moving through the scenes of old France in splendid costumes, carrying the well-spoken drama quietly, but very effectively. I have never seen a serious marionette play better done, and many a stage play worse done. The characterisation was distinct and appropriate, a subtle air of dignity and suspense being given to the drama by the restrained action, the emphatic nod of a marionette head, the formal, deliberate lifting of a hand in precisely the right place. It is interesting that the Stevens feel they have reached a point in manipulation where the puppets move with, perhaps, too great a restraint, but with the least possible foolishness. It sounds a workmanlike basis on which to build. It is a very competent production, and would satisfy any intelligent audience.

In the afternoon of the next day we saw Marjorie Batchelder's presentation of Maeterlinck's *The Death of Tintagiles*, translated by Paul McPharlin and produced through special arrangements with the author and translator. The production was designed, built and directed by Marjorie Batchelder.

Miss Batchelder is the enterprising lady who obtained her Master's degree of the Ohio State University with a marionette production of *The Birds* by Aristophanes. She is now a member of the University staff, and her Puppet Players is an organisation connected with the Department of Fine Arts.

This performance was carried out by rod puppets, figures held from below the stage on a stiff rod, and which have a very restricted movement of simple turns and arm liftings. The scene was without a proscenium, a large plastic setting with a castle tower ten feet high, heavy walls and solid Gothic arches. Clever lighting changed with the play, and there was music specially composed by Charles Martin Loeffler. I may as well confess that I have not the faintest idea of what the play is about, but I know that Miss Batchelder's production made my flesh creep, and it produced such a weird poetic atmosphere that I read a number of stories into the tones, the lightings and deep emotions evoked by the symbolic movements of the uncanny figures. The scene of the Three Fates, if that is what they are, stealing the infant Tintagiles was powerful and terrible, and the final scene of a little lonely figure agitated at the closed door of the turret was heartrending. Miss Batchelder presented the performance as an experiment, which she felt free to make as her living is not directly dependent upon the production. As the play is called by Maeterlinck "A Play for Marionettes", it was exceedingly interesting to see this adventurous production.

In the evening we gave our performance to an hilarious audience. We were relieved because the serious tone of the preceding productions had made us wonder if a solemn fashion had got the American movement by the neck. But they laughed, these good American puppet artists, and I

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think they know what they are doing with their serious plays. They are not a solemn affectation to the exclusion of everything else ; they are a stage in study and development, and a reaction from the sickening idea of an ignorant public that the Puppet Theatre is only for children.

"Butler! Butler! Butler!" roared the audience rising to their feet after our performance. "Butler! Where's your hat?" Having lost my hat I found my hands being filled with tribute in the shape of one cent pieces, five hundred and thirty-seven of them, which I carried about in a *Duke's Mixture* tobacco bag for three months until they were finally dispersed.

The puppeteers were pleasantly flattering ; experienced as they are in the marionette many confessed that it was the first time they had seen an effective hand-puppet performance.

"Thank you, Mr. Wilkinson. It's the first hand-puppet show I've seen worth looking at. I like them better than marionettes. I'm just going home to start right in to make one myself."

"You've got us all beat. With ten cents worth of material and a comb you hold an audience better than we can with all our junk." A mild exaggeration, to say the least.

"Oh, dear, Mr. Wilkinson, what have you done! Here have I been teaching my children so carefully all the rules of the hand-puppet, and you've just broken every one! I've told them to walk the puppets out at the side, and now I see that the popping up and down from below is just the one proper thing for them to do. One thing after another you did. Oh, dear! What am I going to say to them!"

This was all very pleasing and encouraging because they were all experienced puppet artists, and their appreciation was worth having. And it was intelligent expression—they

had grasped at once the significance of the performance, the effort to use the puppet to the fullness of its peculiar characteristics and possibilities instead of restricting it to a bad imitation of a human actor. But I hope they will continue the marionettes, and not, as they threatened, abandon them for the hand-puppet. Each kind of puppet has its uses—let us employ them all.

On the Wednesday afternoon the scene changed to Russia. Basil Milovsoroff, a Russian-born wood sculptor, but a graduate of Oberlin College, Ohio, exhibited in his Russian Marionette Theatre *The Little Humpbacked Horse*, an Ivan the Fool folk-tale. I will say at once that we must be grateful to Milovsoroff for sticking to his Russian tradition. It is a pity that the whole Russian nation did not do the same. How a socialist regime could so stupidly seek to imitate the essential structure of capitalism is an historical idiocy that wants a lot of explaining. But let us keep to the marionettes and puppet-showmen who have more sense and are less harmful than human beings. Milovsoroff is steeped in Russian folk-lore, and his theatre enshrines all its spirit, its colour, its humour and its wisdom. In these stupid and ugly days, when folk-art is divorced from life and imprisoned in museums, it is a rare pleasure to see the curtain of a marionette theatre drawn and a Russian peasant room disclosed in all its brightness, and Ivan snoring on top of the stove. From that moment we lived in the genius of Russia, that genius behind the Russian Ballet, the power and warmth of rich colour, the creation of a visible, credible, ideal world—the highest art of the theatre. Of course, I like that sort of thing—you must excuse me if it goes to my head, but Milovsoroff's marionette theatre is definitely in the world of art in every way, in its use of the marionette, allied by the instinct of the artist with folk-lore. Bis! Bis! Basil Milov-

soroff! I hope you will save for the world this vision of the best of old Russia. It may yet teach us how to live.

In the evening we laughed. I have never laughed more in my life. We rolled on those seats in the middle of Cincinnati and howled. Personally I ached all over; my cheeks ached and my stomach ached. It was excruciating. The cause of all this was Rufus and Margo Rose and their marionettes. They first performed a refreshing version of *Snow White and Three of the Seven Dwarfs*, dramatised by Martin Stevens, and a reaction I imagine against certain mawkish puppet productions. It was wicked, but it preserved the charm of the story, all the same, and devastated us with laughter. This was followed by *The Marionette Carnival*, with Sam, a Negro master of ceremonies. We saw a miraculous Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers dancing, and a Sonja Heine skating, and we were literally wiped from our chairs by Oscar, the trained seal, who was more "sealish" than any seal I have seen. It is impossible to describe his wistful repentance for mistakes, or his erratic performance of *God Save the King* on the motor horns. The Roses have shaken loose their marionettes; they live with an irresistible verve and abandon, and exhilarating gaiety.

These were all the performances we saw, which were sufficient to show the energy and the skill of the American puppeteers. These were all very competent "entertainment", each in their own character, and on the level with theatre performances of any kind. And this is saying a good deal, because the Puppet Theatre is the revival of a lost art and there have been a great many technical difficulties to overcome, not only in forging the instrument, but also in exhibiting it. It is as if a violinist had first to invent the construction of his violin, compose the music and educate an

audience before he could give his first recital. The Americans are certainly forging the instrument of the Puppet Theatre for exhibition in modern times. It is early yet to think too seriously of the art of using the instrument—that must be the next development—although the particular end of puppet art must be sought for and established because the end conditions the means by which it is to be reached. I should say that there is still a tendency to imitate the theatre, but in the use of the restricted rod-puppet, and in the choice of ready-made theatre plays there is evidently an idea of the puppet's peculiar talents. Ultimately it is the old question—the free and frank use of a limited medium for the communication of the greatest human consciousness.

The static exhibition of puppets on the buffet table covered the whole of the United States. The Festival was not held in Cincinnati because the movement is of the Middle West alone ; there is a good Middle West activity, as there is in all American art now, but the movement is not particularly regional or national—it is part of the world movement—and, as far as the modern use of puppets goes, the leading part I should think. For instance, there was a bold *Paul Jones* company by Ralph Chesse of Los Angeles ; there was a thorough and delightful book on hand-puppets by Bessie Ficklen of New Orleans ; Paul McPharlin from Detroit exhibited some very sensitive and charming figures for a play on Mozart's life, accompanied by his music ; there were puppet Indians made by the Haskell Indians, a live Shakespeare by Nella Broussard of Texas, and sailors, Black Mammies, and sophisticated dancers, that have danced with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, by Mr. and Mrs. Keogh of Toronto. Otto and Caroline Kuntze of New York had some excellent hand-puppets there, as did

PUPPET FESTIVAL

Perry Dilley of San Francisco. There was every kind of puppet and shadow figure, and even charming little finger puppets by Burr Tillstrom of Chicago.

Some marionettes carved by Roy Patton for the Tatterman Marionettes' production of *Peer Gynt* looked very good indeed. The Tatterman Marionettes of Cleveland is the world's largest puppet organisation, and is the astonishing child of William Duncan and Edward Mabley. These two met in Detroit at a traditional Greek shadow-puppet show which is a summer attraction in the garden of a Greek coffee-house. Being the only Americans present they discussed the performance, and in 1923 they organised their troupe. They have done everything with puppets, and among their many productions they have two companies on the road performing *The Taming of the Shrew* in a replica of the Globe Theatre. And now—*Peer Gynt*. "This production of *Peer Gynt* is dedicated to the hundreds of sincere artists and professional puppeteers throughout the United States who have done so much to build up the interest in marionettes in America." And its purpose is "to definitely establish the marionette theatre as a popular dramatic art form in America."

It is Ibsen's poem *Peer Gynt*, translated by William and Charles Archer, music by Edvard Grieg, production designed by Terence Von Duren, presented by William Duncan and Edward Mabley. There are eight operators and forty-four marionettes, the costumes correct to the smallest detail, and each figure, as could be seen by those exhibited, a work of art in itself. The play was chosen because the marionette is a better medium for the unreal creature parts, in which human actors always look like men running around in strange guises, and because these creatures could be scaled down to give the necessary effect of spaciousness the drama

demands. From these figures and from photographs it would appear that this is a first-class artistic achievement.

This is a very dry account of the conference. I have tried to carve out the mass of American puppetry, and it gives nothing of the personalities, or of the heat of Cincinnati, or of the incidentals like Paul McPharlin taking us to lunch with David Lano, whose great-grandfather, a puppet showman, was exiled from Italy, and whose grandfather and father were also puppeteers. David Lano, who was born in a covered wagon, continues the profession with the bold hand of the traditional showman. He is producing a version of the *Pied Piper of Hamelin*, "but", said he, "that tragic end is all wrong. I've got a better idea than that. That's all wrong. We've got two acts after the children go into the mountain—they are going to meet all the old Roman gods."

We contrived to see a little of Cincinnati, which is worth seeing. It seemed only a few weeks since we had listened to those direct reports of the great floods, and we walked down to the river, to see how it had covered the sloping ground up to the warehouses, and climbed to the third floor—an incredible rise. Little sign of it remained—a ring of mud round a telegraph pole, or a muddy wall here and there. The warehouses were busy with fantastic amounts of Indian corn, and on the river were those dear old friends of my boyhood's pictures, double-decker steamers with a long black funnel fore and aft and one large paddle wheel at the stern. The river is wide, and to cross it by one huge bridge and return by another was almost a morning's work. Of all the sights we might have seen we chose the railroad station, which is a great bow of concrete, beautifully decorated within, and with large murals by Winold Reiss representing the many industries of the city. If you are lost in an American city—go to the railroad station. You will sit in a

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palace, be able to shop, and feed yourself at a good restaurant. Cincinnati is a busy metropolis, quite foreign, very hot, with many of its citizens in cotton suits and panama hats. It has a wide river and many beautiful parks, and from our hotel window we looked down on a handsome baroque fountain, glittering with water and graced by flights of pigeons. But for us it must remain the City of Puppets.

HEAT—DETROIT—CHICAGO

WE moved on into the flat country north of Cincinnati, a green country with many trees, bright with flowers in the radiant sun, and we pulled up at Yellow Springs, a small community of fifteen hundred people and containing Antioch College. We were to stay for a few days with a friend, on the staff of the college, and we found ourselves again in the delightful wooden house with the tasteful furniture, the collection of choice books, a Negro maid, and a garden, beautifully maintained, which at the moment was glorious with hollyhocks. Almost every garden was glorious with hollyhocks ; and they flowed over to the green verges of the streets. Variegated hollyhocks, green trees and white houses made Yellow Springs very pleasing.

This chapter, you must understand, moves through heat. A heat-wave was on the country and the papers were making merry with paragraphs of this nature : " Some other temperatures : Cincinnati, 92 ; Cleveland, 93 ; Washington, 94. Also, Cool, Ia., 95 ; Hell, Mich., 93 ; Devil's Den, Ark., 93 ; Cold Point, Pa., 96 ; in Sprinkle, Tex., it sprinkled."

It was certainly very warm, and its insistence sapped away our strength. If we were in the garden we imagined it would be cooler in the house, and if in the house we wondered what it was like in the garden. We only wondered—as moving anywhere was disastrous. There was something you ought to do, write a letter, or unpack a bag, but the feeble inspira-

tion would die away, and you did nothing. I remember reading one page of a newspaper several times because the effort to fold the large leaves would have been too great. Anyway, I forgot what I was reading. All will power went in this miasma of heat, and I began to suspect softening of the brain. The bath-room became a very desirable chamber, but on the whole I preferred the garden, where you could watch the blue jays in the locust trees and see the ruby-throated humming birds, more like moths than birds, hovering over the trumpet flower creeper, dipping their long bills in for the honey.

The kind car lifted us from this loathsome inertia, and we coasted round one more lovely campus of an American college. Antioch, as well as the usual lawns and groves of trees, has a wild, wooded ravine terminating in a lake, and acres of woodland in which is the sulphur spring which gives Yellow Springs its name, and the old wooden pavilion, the rendezvous of visitors that had been attracted by the waters. Its days as a spa are over. There have been changes in Yellow Springs. About a hundred years ago the district was split up into half-mile squares, and settled. Some of the present-day inhabitants are direct descendants of the settlers and still on the original plots. There is a settlement of Negroes descended from escaped slaves, and one old Negro lady had just died who, as a child, had been brought across the river on ice-floes as in the great scene in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Before the settlers there had been Indians, and the near-by village of Old Town was on the site of the Shawnee town of Chillicothe, which town had been burned down four times, and the Shawnee chief had been granted a commission in the British Army.

Yellow Springs was getting interesting. Antioch College is no ordinary seminary. Its last President was Dr. Arthur

Morgan, who is now the famous chairman of the T.V.A., that immense engineering project in the Tennessee flood area sponsored by the government, and now the subject of a great dispute between the champions of private and government enterprise. The college has an interesting system, by which the students are educated in the usual curriculum but also educate themselves in earning a living and the ways of the world, by alternating periods of study in the college with equal periods of working professionally in some position outside the college. The only product of the system I have met is Rufus Rose, who made us laugh so much at the Puppetry Festival, and if all the graduates equal him in cultured character and in their respective activities, then the college must be a very great success.

Nor is that by any means the whole of Yellow Springs—this little town of hollyhocks, humming birds and white houses flourishing in the sun. We went to supper with Miss Eleanor Currier Lewis, who is eighty-six years of age, and blind, but a stylish conversationalist of the old regime, cultivated, thoughtful and witty. Her mother had built the house in which she was living, and her mother had been a friend and disciple of the famous Mrs. Bloomer—the knicker-bocker lady who was such a rich source of amusement to us as schoolboys—and Miss Lewis told us of this conversation between her mother and Horace Mann, the famous American educator.

HORACE MANN: I wonder if you would permit me to inquire the reasons for wearing your costume.

MRS. LEWIS: Certainly, Dr. Mann. I can have no objection to that.

HORACE MANN: What I wish to know—is some principle involved, or is it simply a personal fad?

MRS. LEWIS: No, Dr. Mann, it is not just a personal fad—

there is a principle involved. When living with my father I helped him with his farm, and worked in the fields just as a son would have worked, and consequently the costume was very convenient and practicable. When I was no longer working on my father's farm I thought to wear a more ordinary form of dress, but then I found that my health was beginning to suffer with the change, and I returned to my former practice—whereupon my health was immediately restored.

HORACE MANN : I see. Then there is a principle involved. And as there is a principle involved I am perfectly satisfied.

In Mrs. Lewis' time a girl had attended the college who had habitually worn the "bloomers". She was unmolested until Commencement, when the authorities objected to such garments being worn at the ceremony. As the girl objected to the authorities' objections, and had been to the trouble of making a specially beautiful and appropriate "pair", she did not appear to read her essay and was not given her parchment. Years afterwards a later President discovered the old diploma, made inquiries, and invited the lady back to the contemporary Commencement. She returned as a distinguished physician, and received her diploma—in "bloomers" !

History repeats itself, and recently the college has been bothered by a girl who insists upon wearing very short "shorts" and a frail shirt that has all the appearance of underclothing, and I am afraid that the descendants of Mrs. Bloomer's disciples looked upon this as quite extraordinary and not at all to be encouraged.

From Mrs. Bloomer we went to Clement Westbrook Michael, who lies buried in the village cemetery under a marble slab, engraved "A Native of England". This fellow lived a couple of miles from Mrs. Lewis' grandfather

in the early "fifties". With other people he had come to drink of the yellow spring, and had liked the district so much that he had bought a house and settled down as a country gentleman. He sent to England for blooded horses, beautiful furniture, wall hangings and fine china.

Grandfather and Mr. Michael struck up a nodding acquaintance as they passed on the road, the one in a plain, old buckboard, the other on horseback. From this they grew to conversations, which were usually held as they sat on the edge of a pump trough. From these conversations Grandfather came to the conclusion that Mr. Michael was quite a gentleman in spite of his English defects, and Mr. Michael was heard to say :

"By gad! Mr. Gates is a gentleman if he is just a farmer. Damme, sir! Gates has good blood in his veins. Damme, sir! He's a gentleman!"

But Clement Westerbrook Michael was a mystery. He informed no one as to who he was, and no one had the courage to ask him. But imagination got to work, and, as most of his letters bore a coat-of-arms, the legend became firmly established that he was connected with an English duke, on the wrong side of the blanket, or that he was a son of Lord Byron!

Anyhow, he lived very happily until he fell in love with a particularly lovely girl. During a brief courtship he managed to present her with a Broadwood piano costing over a thousand dollars, a gold watch set with jewels and a necklace of gold and sapphires. During this period the conversations progressed from the pump trough to sitting in the barn and discussing his happiness—but, the night before the wedding, the girl ran off with another man and married him. That was the end of the Gilbertian Clement Westerbrook Michael, for he died very quickly of a broken heart.

And so, as we sat in the Lewis house among the pictures of Rome and Florence, or walked in the garden under the English trees and by the rows of Indian corn, the sweet potatoes and the toe-may-toes, the curtain gradually lifted from Yellow Springs, and one more little spot on the great American map came to life. Our friends spoke well of the Negro community, which is poor, some of the cabins having earth floors and being without water laid on. The Negroes, they say, work with care and affection, and still gladden the hours with that genius for using long words in the wrong place. One Negro, wishing to describe a popular lady, had said, "She is the most populous lady in the town," which was awkward, as the lady had twelve children! And another, a chicken farmer, had installed a chicken "instigator". These Negroes have their own way of doing things. One maid had left her mistress to get married, but she returned three weeks after to take up her old job. All the explanation the mistress got was "Oh, ah jes' got kind o' tired o' Jim". And another maid on leaving to marry had given her savings, thirty dollars, into the safe-keeping of her mistress, and when asked in surprise if she did not want them now she was married, had replied, "Why, no. Ah wouldn' like to take them among a lot of strange men!" There was the man, too, who was asked what name he would give his new baby. "Oh, ah don't think nuthin' about a name for 'em till the next one comes along—ah jes' call 'em baby."

It was the same as soon as we got any way out of Yellow Springs—revelations were thrust at us. In a few miles we passed through Osborne, and this little town that looked so innocent and so settled, had, eleven years before, been put upon rollers and shifted two miles to move it out of a flood area. In Dayton is the shop where the Wright brothers invented the first aeroplane—confound them—and outside

is a magnificent flying field named after them. You go into Xenia and find tree-shaded, well-to-do streets, and you go into the country by leafy lanes with blue mists of chicory flowers in the banks, and finally you arrive at Fort Ancient State Park and find yourself climbing a great wooded hill, walking among the remains of prehistoric mound-building Indians, and looking out magnificently over the valley of the Little Miami river. And you wind up by drinking *Lime Rickeys* and in going to a very amusing performance, in the Yellow Springs Opera House, of *The Streets of New York*, produced excellently by the professional dramatic workers of Antioch College, who are starting off on a summer tour. There seems to be no reason why you should live anywhere but in Yellow Springs.

We left Yellow Springs by train, and coming in by degrees to the suburbs of Detroit we almost wished we hadn't. The first walk-out into a strange city is perhaps the best. We walked-out into Detroit the evening we arrived and found ourselves among huge, decorative buildings that looked like art galleries and museums, great buildings rearing mountainous walls above us, great pink-cake buildings with green marzipan trimmings, and grey buildings with gold trimmings, and streets of windows running up the facades. But when we read the name plates we found that they were Trust Companies, an organisation I have never dared to inquire about for fear of exposing my ignorance or of not comprehending the explanations.

"Couldn't you make a little drawing of that one?" said Winifred, and we were convulsed, and then terrified, because on looking round no one was laughing, or singing, or seemed to be living at all in this wonder city of the world. More sedately we walked on, but were severely shocked by seeing

a placard before us : "TUNNEL TO CANADA", and then on the river-quay another notice : "Parking All Day, Including The Moonlight, 25 cents." The moonlight referred to the time you might spend in dancing and feasting on a steamer-cruise in the moonlight, for that is the manner of relaxation in Detroit. After looking at the lights of Windsor, Canada, over the water, and walking unprofitably by more rectangular blocks of buildings, we retired, and were well entertained most of the night by the loud roar of the *Detroit News* being printed over the way in a building weird with blue light.

The map of Detroit is all too illuminating. Significant black areas stand out, and as you look at them expecting to see cathedrals, art galleries and opera houses you find they are all motor works. Turning to the "legend" in the corner for more information you are invited to buy a Real Estate Atlas, weighing fifty pounds and costing \$150.00. It is frequently revised, so, I suppose, you can have the pleasure of buying a new edition once a month! In 1900 the population of Detroit was 285,704, now it is over 1,500,000. Then it was a slumberous town that made a few stoves, now it is—! What a good thing that Paul McPharlin took us out to the suburb of Birmingham among the trees, where we could talk puppetry, look at his play bills and old prints of puppets, his library of puppet books, and the *Fine Editions* of American works he is publishing. There were also his gramophone records of Oriental music, to which we danced, and the medieval dining-table on a dais, and those tall glasses of little coloured balls made from every kind of melon. And there was the day of visitors, that began at ten in the morning and ended at eleven at night, with Helen Reisdorf, who is secretary of the Puppeteers of America ; Elena Mitcoff, the translator of that fascinating book, *Adventures of a*

Russian Puppet Theatre, and a puppeteer herself; Martin Stevens, who would keep asking of the gods what exactly he was doing as a puppet showman—"What *am* I? What *am* I?" and Mrs. Robinson, an old resident of Detroit, a delightful lady who said that Detroit was a charming town until the motor industries arrived, and recalled how, as children, they used to do their lessons on the river steamers.

In spite of all its cars, its crowded streets and its cheap stores for automotive workers, Detroit has a splendid oasis in the white stone Merrick Public Library and the white stone Art Institute, standing facing each other on opposite sides of the central Woodward Avenue. What they are there for it would be difficult to say, but there they stand surrounded by trees and grass, two white holy temples, Art on the one hand, Culture on the other, filled with the lovely hand-made work of artists, in the midst of all this mad, machine- and mass-produced tin trumpery of motor cars. There are many distinguished works in the Art Institute, and one of its sensations is the court with the Diego Rivera murals illustrating the production of cars—as neat a picture of Hell as I ever wish to see.

It was in Detroit that Paul McPharlin introduced us to the Works Progress Administration Art Project. This seems to me one of the most remarkable and liberal public assistance efforts ever made by any state. It means that artists, actors, musicians and writers, who have suffered from the economic disturbances, are paid a living wage for which they must produce work for the Administration. Under this scheme musicians have given their services to public concerts and free performances in parks; actors have produced plays and puppet showmen have given instruction in schools and performances in parks, while writers have produced a series of guide-books and at least one volume of stories,

essays and poems has been compiled and published under the scheme.

Here in Detroit we met some of the artists at work, a group of sculptors producing statues, fountains and memorials for beautifying schools and other public buildings. At least the intention is to beautify, but I have heard one artist say that he will not work under the scheme unless he has the job of whitewashing all the W.P.A. murals out of existence, and removing the statues. There is something in that, of course, but the scheme does, at least, keep artists from competing with decent workmen in the labour market, and here, in Detroit, it has caught one poor student whose murals are certainly excellent, and who will now get experience that otherwise might have been difficult to get.

We saw also some contributions to the Index of American Design that is being produced under the scheme, and here were drawings of old American craft works, of furniture, buildings, weather-vanes, Indians that had been used as tobacco-shop signs, and the old marionettes of the Lano family. It is a wise and courageous "hand out" on the part of the government, and perhaps through this consideration to artists, society will one day realise that art cannot be divorced from life, that it is, indeed, the only means of preventing unemployment—but that is a long story.

Being in Detroit we made the Grand Tour of the Ford Motor Company Rouge Plant and the Greenfield Village. The Ford company is very generous. It has a supply of "buses and guides" that are devoted to impertinent visitors like myself. You go first to the Rotunda, a clever stone building with a decorative zig-zag wall, and then you fill in an application form to visit the works. You have to sign a "waiver"—that is to say if you fall into a vat of boiling metal during the inspection you waive all claims for com-

pensation. You get into a car with many other visitors, and are driven down the road to the plant—and, you understand, it is exceedingly hot.

At the gates you are confronted with masses of buildings, weird white chimneys and furnaces, large steamers and railroad engines, and overhead an aeroplane slowly encircles the works. Once inside the gates the fun begins. Nimpty-numpty acres of grounds; nimpty-numpty miles of roadway; nimpty-numpty everything. In about two seconds *you* are entirely crushed, and the Rouge Plant emerges triumphant.

In single file we mounted an iron staircase and entered a lengthy building with nimpty-numpty acres of floor space. It was all very orderly and calm as that sort of thing goes. It is not my idea of an ideal human residence, but for an engineering shop it was distinctly tidy. There was a good deal of noise, nothing extraordinary, nothing as bad as a cinema organ, for instance, but just a continual roar, with an accent here and there, as if a hundred elephants were dancing on a tin roof. You are fascinated by a firework display of sparks, when, suddenly, a travelling crane about as big as the Eiffel Tower charges down on you, and by the time you have opened your eyes again the fireworks are over. But you walk along the iron gallery and find yourself over a glowing bar of red-hot steel, falling from a furnace to moving rollers. The ingot begins to be rolled. The large square bar is like a running thing alive. It moves through the tanglement of rollers, presses and supports, becoming flatter and wider. It disappears on your left, travels nimpty-numpty yards up the shop, and then alarms you by suddenly appearing on your right, still moving, still red-hot, and still getting thinner and flatter. You wander on for a few more miles and presently are astonished to see your old friend, the

flying ingot, popping out of a press, the finished thin sheet of metal out of which the body of your Ford V8 has been stamped. Well, well! So that is how it is done you say to yourself, but I for one was glad to get out into the daylight again.

After this we were lost in close-packed industry. We were entangled in changing shifts ; we struggled through dense, noisy shops with conveyers carrying stuff above our heads, long snakes of chains that coiled round corners, went up to the roof and came down to waiting hands. In glass chambers men worked in weird green lights. A whistle blew, the conveyer stopped, and we were startled to hear human voices in this unearthly scene. The workers, at the end of their shift, raised a timid shout, and leaping over benches, jostling the crocodile of sightseers to bits, made for freedom.

We went over the stairs where, the week before, there had been a fight between union men and the company agents, followed by a car chase through Detroit after a camera-man who had photographed the scene.

The Ford Motor Company is one of the last strongholds of rugged individualism—it would like its workers to exert their fine individualism by obeying the individualism of the company. There may be a mess in Detroit one day, but there has been a great change in the matter of labour organisation in the United States in recent years. Unskilled labour has changed from defenceless immigrants, stuttering broken English, to American citizens. That is why John L. Lewis is a rising figure, and why, I suppose, the old dreadful private armies of industrial concerns do not find it so easy to operate.

Eventually we arrived at the last conveyer, where you see two men lift a chassis framework on to the slowly moving

belt. They fix a couple of wheels, and go back for another framework as two more men fix the other wheels to the first chassis. This must be a very luscious sight for a car-hungry soul. In a few minutes, by way of the engine, steering wheel, brakes, seats and hood, etc., the whole vehicle grows before your eyes and is pushed off the end complete—one of practically a thousand that grow up like mushrooms every day. We have seen it all—but I would rather see a puppet show any day of the week. It is curious that we walked more in the Ford works than anywhere in America, and I think, with all their generosity, the company might provide a conveyer for visitors.

The Edison Institute Museum and the Greenfield Village, almost as nice as a real village, are a further generosity on the part of Henry Ford. The Museum, housed in a delightful replica of Independence Hall, Philadelphia, is being packed with an educational display of transportation, beginning with chariots from ancient tombs and ending with the last Ford model. All the Fords are there, and many early famous automobiles, and thrilling covered wagons and stage coaches.

The village has forty-eight historic buildings set round a spacious green, among which are the small birthplace of the first Ford car, the cycle shop of the Wright brothers, Edison's workshop and first electric lighting, the typical inn, chapel, school, courthouse and town hall, and a delightful general store crowded with early Victorian commodities.

These two exhibitions, the Rouge Plant and the village, are a pathetic juxtaposition. With my lofty contempt for *all* industrial production it was amusing to see that when Henry Ford really wants to enjoy himself he builds a village, and when he wants to build a really nice museum he goes back to the old Independence Hall of Philadelphia. You may

say that these are simply of historical interest and for educational purposes, but I must say that the educational effect upon me was simply to show how much more desirable the Greenfield Village—with its separate buildings round the green and its horse-drawn vehicles—was than his damned old Rouge Plant. But let us get out of Detroit before I explode.

While in Detroit we had really done something—we had bought railroad tickets to Santa Fé in the state of New Mexico, the fabulous South-West, the land of sun and deserts, fifteen hundred miles across the continent, and we passed on to Chicago to get the transcontinental train, The Grand Canyon Ltd.

Chicago! We had practically a day in Chicago, and we looked on the scene with the best of intentions. We went to see Lake Michigan, but could only find the sea, a vast water going out to the sky with steamer smoke, and no steamer, on the horizon, and a few people bathing from a sandy beach. Along the waterfront are magnificent gardens, and over the road rises a giant barricade of magnificent buildings, and we walked along the magnificent Michigan Boulevard, by the magnificent white Wrigley Building, past a magnificent newspaper office like a Gothic cathedral—well, Chicago *is* magnificent, and not a bit like Blackburn or Golders Green. It shoots up into the blazing sun, huge, clean and bright, and not at all unlike “Thine Alabaster Cities gleam” of Katharine Lee Bates.

We walked round The Loop, that maelstrom of business and where Mr. Selfridge began life as an apprentice boy; we listened to the shrieking of brakes checking the swift traffic, and we soaked ourselves in the sun and the magnificence of the water-front. But after seeing a down-and-out

asleep among the bushes, and a derelict asleep under a statue, a weird old-timer slouching past the elegant shops, we felt that our good intentions were being assailed, and we retired into the Art Gallery. Here we encountered the French Impressionists in large numbers, a great influence on American painting, and also a lively room of modern Chicago painters representing the contemporary trend away from the French towards a purely American school. They are vigorous paintings, all knocking Chicago about with wild, tumbled drawings, a sarcastic commentary that again assailed our good intentions. We were on safer ground in the room of Chicago worthies, the academic portraits, all in frock coats and flowing silk, of scholars and musicians, financiers, the inventor of steel-framed buildings, and the cultured ladies who had endowed and encouraged the arts in the city. The Art Gallery has an excellent practice of exhibiting work from the Art Schools, and also a room full of amusing and very good children's drawings and modelings.

By the time we had unravelled a mystery concerning our fifteen-hundred-mile railroad tickets, it was night, and we had become aware of the very serious nature of booking clerks, an impression that caused us to hoot when we came across this description in Paul Horgan's novel, *Main Line West* :

"The ticket agent was sour and grey in the face, like a man who detests the food that keeps him alive, and yet must have it. Dyspeptically he examined Danny to see if he were half-fare age, and admitted it. He asked if they would take a Pullman ; he admitted there was a day-coach on the train that left at ten fifteen. He made change with petulant fingering of the coins and bills, and handing it back to Danny squinted at him with meaningless but terrible concern.

Danny felt the look as a threat, and grabbed his money and marched out ready to be arrested."

But we got our tickets, yards of them, and a final booking-clerk, after the traditional grimness, blossomed out into a friend for life.

We still had a few hours to wait for the train. As we sat in the Fred Harvey restaurant at the station a man in a shirt and knickers, with a gun in a holster and cartridge belt round his waist, entered, and was joined by a shabby hang-dog fellow. The two walked to a far corner, and after some intense head to head conversation they went out in a very business-like way. We did not like it—our good intentions were being assailed again. We were then persuaded to join a dollar night tour of the city, and I am afraid that it only succeeded in breaking down our good intentions entirely. From the bright waterfront we turned into a world of dark streets, and the guide "handed out the goods"; he gave us what the public wants.

"In that Dance Hall on your left a gangster chief was shot dead. In this section operated the far-famed Al Capone. All round here such and such a gang used to live. Now passing the Red Light district. Here, poor people live, crowded into rooms without baths and without light. Now passing through the Avenue of Death, so called because umpteen dead bodies were carried up here after a battle between rival gangs. Now in the coloured quarter—umpteen thousand coloured folk living here, and that's umpteen thousand too many."

We concluded the tour on the weird underground road by the river in which a pleasure steamer had capsized, and I am afraid it all left a nasty taste in the mouth. It was not so much the content of the guide's remarks as the insistence on the gangsters to the exclusion of all else. In the streets

you see thousands of mild citizens who have never seen a gangster in their lives I am sure. Of course, Chicago has grown up with a touch of the Wild West, but who are we, after the World War and in the proximity of the next, to exclaim about a few wild lads in Chicago! And are *all* those Negroes so undesirable? They have done a lot of dirty work, for not too much pay, which has allowed white Americans to enjoy more skilled work.

There was still an hour before we need mount the train, and we leaned idly over the bridge where the lake tours start. There was a sort of music coming from somewhere, and down on the quay we discovered a Negro manipulating a one-man Jazz band. The next moment another Negro, a loose, agile figure came dancing out of a dark doorway; he danced all over the quay, spinning a tray in his hand, tilting it in every position, and dancing all the time. He pitched the tray away and made love to the lamp-post, he overbalanced on the edge of the quay in perfect rhythm, he laughed, waved to the people on the bridge above, and never ceased to vary his steps, now fast, now slow, now a walk, but always dancing. He danced away into the dark doorway and a moment after emerged very solemnly with a life-belt round his waist, a broom between his legs, like a cock-horse, and a canoe paddle in his hands. As the drum rattled and cymbals crashed he danced a canoe voyage all over the quay, paddling himself round the lamp, nearly falling over the edge, colliding with the band, dancing his way through rough and smooth water, dancing all the time. It was a masterpiece of a dance—certainly the happiest thing we saw in Chicago.

TRANSCONTINENTAL

I CANNOT say with assurance even the name of the river, or how long it was, or where it had its source, or the principal cities on its banks, but there it was beside the railroad track, a major American river, a vast stretch of golden water receding to a distant line of bank, a peaceful scene of wide water flowing heavily under the pale heavens, lovely in the rose-tinted dawn. The train had carried us all night through Illinois, and I suspect the great river of being the Mississippi, and that by crossing it we were certainly going West.

It is strange to feel that the train is your house for a time, that there is no need to scramble out now the night journey is over, but that there is another day, another night, and half the next day before you get out of the narrow, roaring thing. As a matter of fact the train was very comfortable, and for us, who had been moving and working hard, it was a refuge from constant interviews, discussions, and strenuous performances in unusual heat. Our train was The Grand Canyon Limited, one of the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fé trains that run between Chicago and California, and from Kansas City follows the old Covered Wagon Trail. Less than sixty years ago we would have travelled by Concord coach with nine other passengers. The journey would have taken two weeks and cost fifty pounds, but you would have been well entertained by Indians and Bad Men on the way. Now we were travelling through the ninety degrees of heat in a cool, air-conditioned train, with beds, dining car, daily market reports and news, and an amusing open observation

platform at the end of the train. Its movement was very steady, and, on account of the air-conditioning, the doors and windows were closed, making it very quiet. For the moment it was a sanctuary for us, but those old boys, travelling over the prairies and the Rockies, had the best of it—they lived in the sun, men, on their two legs, but we were slumbering larvae muffled in a chrysalis.

We descended from the curtained bunks and repaired to our respective communal lavatories, Winifred, I believe, being embroiled in an orgy of *toilettes*, but I dressed to a touching conversation, between two shaving men, on the shocking rise in price of everything—a quick-fire price list, with comparisons for the different years—an erudite display by virtuosi that left me completely out of it. One man as he pulled on his jacket snapped at me, “You a Britisher?”

“Yes, I am.”

“What do you think of this country, then?” I knew the answer, and I said it:

“Fine!”

“Yeah! I guess we’re just about as well off as anybody.”

“You’ve got more room to move in than most countries.”

“You betcha! But this country’s getting acidity in the budget. I’ll say it is. Well, pleased to meet you!”

The train just travelled on through the fields of Indian corn while we dressed, took our iced orange juice and coffee and cream, and when we came back from the dining car our curtained bunks had entirely disappeared, and two seats by a wide observation window were in their place.

The Negro porter who had performed this miracle was sitting on another seat like a statue. We tried to talk to him, but he remained like a statue, responding with imperceptible shrugs, and without looking at us. This was disappointing as we had hoped for what is horribly called a

"chat", something amusing and quite funny, you know, but the porter was exceedingly serious and dignified—as the waiters had been at breakfast, serving us all impersonally and grandly as if we were beneath their notice. It was a play, obviously; the Pullman staff must have been suffering from a temporary grievance.

There were not many passengers on the train; you feel in these days that American trains are left a little high and dry, and that travellers are out on the roads in their trailers and cars, getting across the continent by way of hotels, tourist rooms, and cabin camps. There were a few hair-dressed girls reading atrocious papers, an odd man or two, and in our vicinity a very respectable old couple from Chicago who always got round to Chicago as a subject of conversation.

"I like Chicago. It's been good to me for fifty-five years, and it's the best little old place I've ever seen. I've got my house and my garden, and I don't want to go to New York, Europe, or anywhere else."

"We only go to California for a holiday," said his wife. "He doesn't really like it, and will grumble about the food and all the people all the time."

"All these Westerners are misfits from the East," he announced serenely. "They just wandered West looking for success. They didn't find it—well, of course they wouldn't—so they just wandered on until they came to the sea and were stopped. And there they just are—just are!" It was an amusing picture, but seemed hardly just.

"You've got a Chicago boy in London—he's a great success I hear—and that's Mr. Gordon Selfridge. Yes, he applied at the Marshall Field store for a job as errand boy, and the Fields took a fancy to him, and decided to make a great merchant of him. And they seem to have done it. It's a great place for young men—Chicago."

PUPPETS THROUGH AMERICA

In the meantime we pushed on persistently through the hot-looking Missouri country, wide spaces of alternating fields of golden wheat stubble, and green Indian corn with long, flopping leaves and the golden tasselled flowers waving in the breeze ; an undulating country studded with grey-green trees wilting and curling in ninety degrees of sun. There was little work going on in the fields ; now, in mid-July, the wheat was cut and carried, the Indian corn still growing, and only here and there a shiny car at the edge of a field to indicate any activity. The wooden houses were everywhere, and the small towns and villages were bright and prosperous. There was a good deal of it, and it may be accused of being monotonous, but it is very bright with sunlight and sunflowers, and has a simple beauty as it lies gold and green under the great sky.

Some miles from Kansas City we began flirting with the Missouri river which brought a new note into the landscape, and in the city itself we pulled up for an hour's rest. We thought to investigate this town of over half a million people, this huge market for agricultural supplies and produce, but ten minutes walking in that blazing sun reduced us to a couple of sticky insects, and we got back to the fifty million dollar station, which seemed good enough for us, and a sufficient indication of the energy and importance of Kansas City.

It was very comfortable in the air-conditioned train, artificially cooled to a bearable temperature, but the open observation platform at the rear of the train was tempting, and in spite of the heat it was amusing to sit and watch the railroad track spun out before you, and Kansas City on its hill receding hazily on the hot horizon. As we pushed into Kansas the country changed slightly ; there were more waste spaces ; silvery ghosts of dead trees stood up against

the sky, and the villages were unpainted, without flower gardens, shabby little jumbles of old wooden shacks. On either side of the track a vague plain stretched away to a few trees on the horizon line, with a stark house standing up at regular intervals. It was difficult to think why one should live in one farm more than another, and where you would go for a walk, and, if you were an artist, what would you draw? It was the hot and flat Middle West with a vengeance.

Somewhere across there was the Dust Bowl which takes in a part of Kansas, that region of prairie that has been exploited, farmed in a business-like way for profit, developed without art or pleasure until the tortured soil, exploited without mercy, has revolted. The wild prairie growth protected the soil, holding it against the winds, but machine ploughing broke up the prairie grass and exposed the loose soil to wind erosion. It was a rich soil yielding unprecedented crops, but now thousands of acres of the primeval soil have been blown away in dust storms. Farms are nothing but arid dust ; crops will not grow and the cattle has been starved and choked to death ; homes and villages have been evacuated and deserted ; nothing grows or lives there, not even birds or jack rabbits, and the few obstinate farmers who stick there from habit, or are too bankrupt to escape, plough the dust, breathe and eat dust, and go down with tuberculosis and dust pneumonia. It is a new Sahara in slap-up modern America, and as we looked at those flat sun-baked acres on either side of the track it was not difficult to imagine something of the sort happening there. But perhaps it will be saved ; there are government schemes working on the problem.

In the evening the country changed. It bristled with hundreds of steel pylons supporting oil pumps, and sprouted gigantic grain elevators with as many as twenty huge con-

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crete cylinders in a row. It was more like a factory than the country. The Eiffel Towers and the huge white castles of elevators dominated the scene, and the cropped fields of grain were only insignificant dirt spaces in between. This was the business man come to the country, the application of the wonders of mechanical progress to the sacred surface of the earth, which has resulted in some dollars for somebody, and has left thousands and thousands of acres of American soil a sterile desert. The splendour of the sun suggested better things ; it was large and ardent, it seemed nearer to the earth, and it went down in a ravishing blaze of red and gold that flung purple shadows across the glowing golden world, and made you burst with a desire to sing and praise it.

The steady ever-moving train pushed on in the dark ; the perpetual motion and the low roar of it were hypnotic. We had ceased to believe that it would ever stop, but felt that it would go on eternally through this strange world of blazing sun. We dined, grew hazy as to the hour, and the day of the week of what month? We put back our watches a couple of hours to Mountain Standard Time, but it meant nothing, except that we were in a weird country regulated by five different Standard Times. The silent Negro porter made the beds, and we went to sleep again behind the Pullman curtains.

And that night was the end of skyscrapers, of all hard, rigid cities of straight lines ; the end of dismal industrialism, and a commercialised countryside. It was the end of stiff, respectable females, and monstrosities of men in frock coats and business suits ; from then on political agitation was a faint far-away voice, and the wicked world of commerce and money-making was forgotten. It had all vanished in the night, for our faithful train had shoved its way to the

high plateau country of Colorado, six thousand feet nearer Paradise than Chicago, London, or New York. We had arrived in the great South-West, and our minds blew up, and all self-control vanished. We were not travellers in a train—we were a set of drunken emotions, lost in a vast world of pink sandy mountains, league upon league of gold and sunlight in fantastic shapes, an unpeopled planet, incredibly beautiful, that intoxicated us beyond reason, beyond everything but that we floated through it all the morning, saw Indians and horsemen in five-gallon hats, lunched at an impossible comic opera town, called Santa Fé, and were motored over the golden desert hills to the very green oasis of Chamita on the banks of the fabulous Rio Grande.

PUPPETS IN NEW MEXICO

Poco tiempo—mañana—take your time. We awoke slowly and gently in this new world, in a bare whitewashed room glowing with reflected sunlight. The ceiling above us was an affair of unplanned boards laid across peeled tree trunks; the woodwork of windows and doors was a crude bright blue, and a crimson, carved chair stood in a whitewashed corner. One window was a mass of convolvulus; at the other waved some tassels of Indian corn, and through the open door, level with our beds, was the green alfalfa field, hollyhocks and sunflowers, and—infinite sunlight.

In the warm, light air we rose and walked straight from our beds to the outside world, the dusty path like a warm carpet to the bare feet, the sun, a sudden pressure of heat to the skin. In the alfalfa were enormous blue, and pink, convolvuli, large delicate flowers that looked at you in crowds, and overcame you with their fragility and loveliness. Large butterflies flopped from scarlet zinnia to golden zinnia, and a humming-bird flitted over little trumpet flowers. We were caught in an ineffable loveliness, in a static perfection of warmth and beauty, of flowers and sunlight, that just held us where we were—no incentive to move—why go anywhere else—just lean against the blue doorpost among the flowers and sunny warmth of New Mexico.

And yet we looked at the house that we had left the skyscrapers to live in for a few weeks. It was a couple of card-

board boxes set side by side, one a little higher than the other, with all the blobby surfaces and bent lines of a cardboard toy. It was a rectangle of two clay rooms with an outside door to each, but no inside door to connect them. It had been the summer residence of Mamie and her Indian husband, who had lived in the midst of their chili and beans, tending them and guarding them from pilfering during the summer. Mamie was the daughter of an Englishman who had worked as a counter-jumper in the East, deserted that for work on the new railroad to the south-west, and had finally married a Spanish-Americana, settling down in this Spanish-Indian world as a smallholder on the banks of the Rio Grande. Mamie had married an Indian, and was evidently a trifle bewildered and dissatisfied by all this mixture of nationalities.

Our house was an adobe house of the South-West, built of bricks made by mixing water and straw with the earth and baking the mixture in the sun ; the large bricks then being piled into thick generous walls that keep out the heat of summer and the cold of winter, and results in a soft, gently-shaped clay rectangle that turns to gold in the sunlight, and merges—according to the best traditions of art—with the golden world about it.

We drifted round to the back of the house, disturbed a lizard or two, found some self-sown shoots of Indian corn springing from the clay, a mass of wild asparagus, and more flowers and butterflies, and a leaning wooden cover to a well under an old apple tree. In the next field some women were working—bright figures in gay printed cottons and large straw hats—they looked like fashionable garden party figures. A man in dungarees and large hat galloped by on a shabby horse. Another very dark young man in a black sombrero wandered by from somewhere to nowhere, smiled

at us, and passed a lazy "Buenos días!" Where were we? In the United States!

A rough, home-made ladder leaned against the house, and we wandered up the rough treads to the flat, clay roof, feeling most appropriately dressed in light dressing gowns—some sort of distant cousins to the Arabs—and our minds rocketed up to the singing and shouting pitch when we saw New Mexico around us. We could see the line of the river, marked by the cottonwood trees, and we could see the cultivated ground which lay within the irrigation ditch, the life vein of this country, and which had been taken off the river some miles up the valley. These ditches wind about the country like snakes, maintaining a strip of narrow cultivation which follows the Rio Grande some four or five hundred miles, through an incredibly large country of arid hills. Beyond the very green cultivation were the arid hills, golden hills sculptured by wind and time into significant forms, and stretching away, a score of miles or so, to the higher peaks of the Rockies, the Sangre de Cristo range, and others, rising to ten thousand feet on either side of the valley down to Santa Fé thirty miles away. It looked a vast, sandy, sun-baked world, empty of life except for the piñon and juniper bushes that dotted the golden hills like little currants dotted regularly over cakes. Some strange exhilaration and excitement seized one; you had to do something, and we descended the ladder with the idea of drawing nearer to these wonders, entered our room with the stamped earth floor, and put a kettle of water on the stove. Before we had undone the tin of coffee the water startled us by boiling in an incredibly short time—we had forgotten that we were six thousand feet above sea-level. We began to breakfast and to dress so that we could be driven to the pueblo.

Our little clay house in the green alfalfa field had been

lent to us by Dorothy—for everyone, high or low, seems to go by their Christian name in the great South-West, where human beings are few and very small in the great hot seas of sand. Dorothy is an artist and a musician who came to Chamita from New York a good many years ago, and now has very little use for the East. With a few acres of irrigated land “below the ditch”, and a house in the sun, she can run a luxurious garden, keep a couple of cows, some chickens, and three Alsatian dogs, and paint big, bold pictures of these adobe houses, the costumed figures and the vivid colour of New Mexico that prim Easterners imagine to be exaggerated—but, little they know!

More and more American artists and writers leave the commercial and political East to settle in this country. Fifty wild, deserted miles further north is the famous Indian pueblo of Taos where Frieda and D. H. Lawrence lived, invited there by Mabel Dodge Luhan who, with other artists, had begun to settle there, and Santa Fé is just bung full of painters and poets, and craftsmen—Mary Austin lived there, and interpreted Indian life; Marie Garland lives across the fields from our clay rooms, and we could hear her peacocks screeching as they strutted about the lovely gardens; all this country is the scene of Willa Cather’s *Death Comes for the Archbishop*; Ernest Seton Thompson has a ranch and his Summer School of Indian Arts, Crafts and Philosophy on the outskirts of Santa Fé, and Georgia O’Keeffe, the most outstanding American woman artist, paints the deserts and bleaching skulls of New Mexico. All American artists and novelists and poets are drawn here in time, and a great many Britishers as well. Galsworthy, I believe, used to stay here; J. B. Priestley is enamoured of a similar country in Colorado; Aldous Huxley was working at the Lawrence ranch near Taos, and

Gerald Heard was at the Ghost Ranch, a collection of little clay houses at the foot of fantastic golden pillars, where there happens to be sufficient water to maintain about fifty people. It is, of course, a glorious playground, a huge Summerland without industrialism, without water to supply factories, a land where only the Indians and the descendants of the Spanish settlers of four hundred years ago can live, not for money and profits, but for self-subsistence. With cunning and art they raise from the arid soil crops of Indian corn, wheat, chili and squash sufficient to live on. They, of course, not debased by factory work and commercialism, are still artists. The Spanish-Americanos still play guitars and sing and dance to Spanish folk-tunes ; the Indians still survive as a complete outfit of paganism ; they can carry fantastic and beautiful costumes with dignity and conviction, and they can dance, not for a decadent amorous stimulus alone, but for the joy and fear of living, in honour and fear of the great inexpressible forces of life.

And we were now plunged into this medley of seventeenth-century Spain, the relics of Cowboyism, the remains of the Stone Age and Cliff Dwellings, and these modern pueblo Indians who could still dance for the rain and fertility and in propitiation of the mighty forces in the air above and in the earth beneath. We breakfasted, it is true, on coffee and Hartley's marmalade, but our minds were stretching out to impossible vistas.

We were to be taken to the village, to shop, to post, and that sort of thing, and dressing as lightly as possible, we walked through an apple orchard to our hostess's house—more clay rooms extended from the original two, and now buried in peach trees, and zinnias about seven feet high with flowers as large as saucers. Dorothy was waiting with her Ford wooden 'bus, and Anne, her friend, was waiting,

too. I suppose we were a bit late, due to *mañana* poetically and laziness literally; it was the heat—the altitude—*mañana—poco tiempo*—take your time. Anyway, nobody seemed to mind, and we started off.

We passed out of the green irrigated garden through a gate of rough juniper branches, and in a moment were in a different world. We brushed a large cane cactus, skimmed an enormous ant-hill, and followed a sandy track among separate, wiry little plants dotted about the arid soil. We came alongside a field of tall Indian corn with a man working in it, a dark-faced, square-jawed man in a purple shirt, and with a pigtail hanging over either shoulder—good gracious, an Indian! We rounded a bushy corner, and swerved to avoid a small covered wagon drawn by mules and filled with a dark Spanish family dressed in very bright cottons; we overtook another Indian, padding along in moccasins, and then we crossed a river of dry, loose sand.

“That’s an arroyo,” said Anne.

“Oh, yes, an arroyo, but what is an arroyo?”

“It’s a river—when it rains. Rather fun—you go to the pueblo, there’s a shower, and you find you can’t get back home for a few hours until the river dries up again. They’re quite a feature of the country, and you don’t want to get caught by one when it rains badly. They come very suddenly sometimes and sweep everything before them. . . .”

Here, Anne, who can drive, smoke a cigarette and put you wise all at the same time, swerved cleverly over a bed of prickly pear to avoid a couple of grave Indians on horseback.

“Arroyo—pueblo—what is this pueblo you are taking us to?”

“Chamita.”

"Yes, I see, but I thought pueblo had something to do with Indians."

"It's Spanish—it's a village."

"Yes, I'll say it is, and will you take us to an Indian pueblo some day?"

"There's one right in front of you—that's San Juan up there—not one of the most famous ones."

On the ridge before us was a line of the cardboard box houses—a series of clay rectangles rising from the clay soil, an Indian clay village silhouetted against a vast blue sky. Behind it lay the corrals made from slender juniper branches, stockades of irregular grey poles almost white in the glittering sun.

"Do you want to get anything at the Trading Post?" asked Dorothy.

"Will we—well, what is a Trading Post?" we inquired cautiously. Evidently we were beginning a course in a new language.

By this time we had rounded the Indian village of San Juan, and were in the contiguous village square of Chamita, with more clay houses, two large churches, a Virgin Mary, a garage and the Trading Post, a large wooden store with a porch running along its front. At that moment a cowboy galloped across the hot, dusty square—simply for the sake of effect, of course; an Indian woman came out of the store, a squat figure with straight black hair, her shoulders swathed in bright, printed cotton, her legs in long, white buckskin moccasins; some youths in check shirts were squatting in front of the clay post office, and a grave old Indian, with pigtailed drooping over either shoulder of his blue shirt, was rolling a cigarette as he leaned against the store. You expected Tom Mix to appear the next minute with a crowd of cowboys "shooting up the burg".

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We got out of the car into the burning sun, and entered this village store. Really, it was getting alarming, this constant business of the mind and emotions blowing up like a balloon and leaving one floating helplessly in spiritual drunkenness. This village shop was a hall, high and long, its walls and ceilings crowded with commodities, and the customers a gaudy array of fantastic clothes. Three or four youths were trying on new hats, those exaggerated Stetsons one associates with circuses ; dark women in store clothes were purchasing groceries ; dark men in dungarees were buying tools, or tobacco ; an Indian, darker still, his pig-tails bound with green ribbon, was buying a poisonous pink shirt, and Indian women and small Korean-looking children stood about patiently in their white, high moccasins and printed wraps. To supply this ballet of customers four or five utterly sophisticated "clerks" were handing out the pink shirts, the five-gallon hats and those cotton bags of *Duke's Mixture* tobacco—a virulent brand that you can see advertised on the horse omnibuses in ancient photographs of New York, and the sale of which has helped to produce the amazing Duke University. In this Trading Post, six thousand feet above the world, we bought some Crosse and Blackwell's Curry Powder, and could have bought an Indian ceremonial drum, or buckskin moccasins, or Indian pots, and if we had been sufficiently educated to ask for them in seventeenth-century Spanish, or in the Indian Tiwa the "clerks" behind the counter would probably have understood, for they get to be tri-lingual in this country.

The store did not contain everything we needed, and we drove through the oddly arranged collection of clay rectangles which composed the rest of the village, and took the highway to Española, a few miles further on. We were now, more or less, cutting across the desert, but being the

highway little adobe houses were springing up on small plots—the houses of a new race of traders coming into the district. We crossed the wide, shallow Rio Grande, and came into Española, one short street of one-storey shops surrounded by a wide spreading colony of adobe houses. The hotel and Western Union Telegraph office was a musical comedy house out of Old Monterey, one of the fanciful and pleasant adobe structures that are the accepted style for all modern buildings in the country. Española is just a practical little American shopping centre, with a drug store, a help-yourself grocery bazaar, the clothing shops and ironmongers, but it is flanked by the Rio Grande, the village street goes out into the desert, and if you go into the bar it is full of Spanish-speaking people, and a gramophone plays guitar music and sings the strident Spanish songs. And you may meet anything in the street—Packards with Eastern tourists and a chauffeur, Indians in moccasins, Dude-ranch cowboys, country wagons drawn by mules, and grotesque old cars of transient workers who load an ancient vehicle with pots and pans, a chair or two, a table, and often an iron cooking range with chimney all complete, and wander round the desert looking for work.

We turned from the highway towards the forest-covered mountains, passing the little golden houses in the golden country. It was Girls' Day, which meant that the girls had the privilege of riding the family nag for the day, and we met bright parties of them, seldom one on a horse, but usually two or three, all perfectly at home on a bare back. We got among the valley hills, so shapely as to seem purposively architected, suggesting ruined temples and palaces with their great round bastions and squared walls, towering structures built of the golden clay that might have been the heroic temples of an ancient and splendid race of giants.

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The clear sun and the sharp shadows brought them into vivid relief ; the weird feeling that they had been inhabited grew upon us as we went deeper into this sun-baked land of natural structures rising from heaps of drifted sand and fallen walls. We bumped across arroyos whose sudden waters had torn up the motor road, and looked down the mysterious dry rivers of sand as they wound away into a canyon between golden precipices. What Conquistador had passed that way? What lonely prospector had cursed its utter dryness, and left his ribs bleaching in the relentless sun?

We passed a village, Santa Cruz, a group of humble adobe houses on the hillside with a few little flower gardens, and the road turned into a proper New Mexico road, a thing of rocks and loose sand, that gets one wheel always higher than the others, and searches out every possible squeak from the wooden 'bus. It led to a battered bridge over a swift stream, that was as bumpy and treacherous as the road, and we were very relieved to get across before it collapsed. The road then climbed into the village of Chimayo, famous for its hand-woven blankets ; a clay village scattered over rough, hilly ground, without distinction except for the lower end of the square where huge cottonwoods rise over the irrigation ditch, and in between the trees you see the twin towers and whitewashed loggia of the clay church built by the old Spanish fathers three or four hundred years ago.

What zeal and courage and enterprise these old Spanish priests had in this strange arid world! Imagine yourself, dear reader, stepping out of a clay hut one Thursday afternoon of the year 16—, and starting to build a great simple barn of a building in a country that had never built anything but small, separate rooms, or accumulations of small rooms that piled up into larger structures. But these priests

raised these churches all over the country, great simple clay structures, of which this Chimayo Sanctuary Church is a beautiful example.

You enter the church by unpainted wooden doors, and at once you are in ancient Spain. No American Drug Store, this—the eyes are greeted by a fandango of painted altar and painted walls, painted figures in niches and painted roof beams. It is a mixture of skilful old paintings and curious home-made works, the old paintings being in that primitive black and umber style, severe in drawing and tragic in feeling. The home-made saints and altar decorations are crude, but beautiful and vivid. There is a delightful Cowboy saint riding a burro ; he is in the traditional dress with a high straw hat, and a handkerchief about his neck. Along the walls are candle sconces made of tin in imitation of the old Spanish silver—old store tins cut prettily, and decorative with patterns of dots punched in the tin with cold steel. It is all beautiful, and very moving—this simple, great barn of a church raised from the native dust, and filled with the home-made decorations, unsophisticated, but alive with intent and feeling.

We came out of the church into the sun, bought some peaches from the dark-eyed, black-haired children, and were astonished to see, on the outskirts of the village, a farmer threshing his wheat in a method that matched the ancient church. The straw was spread in a small enclosure, and a child was driving a herd of goats round and round the area, while a woman raked the straw into position for the dozens of small trampling feet. We were to see many such primitive and charming sights. If the threshing is not done by goats, you may see the wheat spread out at the base of a round rick, and the farmer galloping two or three horses round and round like a gay circus rider. And you can see the corn being

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winnowed in the ancient manner—an Indian woman standing against the sky in all her bravery of bright cotton and white moccasins tilting a basket from over her head, and spilling the grain through the breeze as she stands on some hill-top. Truly, there are more wonders in the United States than you or I have dreamt of.

XVII

DANCING INDIANS

THE hot days drifted by, and we floated insubstantially among the flowers, from the green oasis of the garden to the dry desert, over miles of desert road to small, ancient villages in secluded valleys, up to the green pine forests of the mountains, and down to prosaic shoppings in Española and Santa Fé that were never prosaic. Sun, sun, always this exhilarating sun in the high thin air that burned the days to a sensuous unreality—it was one long theatrical performance, played in a blazing light against a vast panoramic scene, an endless panel of green cultivation, golden hills, and blue mountains.

All the history of this country is a theatrical pageant of colour and costume, of theatrical deeds, bombastic efforts played on the high stage of these tablelands in the brilliant sunlight. First—who knows? Then, in the vague past the fantastic Indians wandered in from Asia, living in lovely dreams of rainbows, and gods walking the earth, in beliefs of having emerged from the dark earth and evolving in a series of planes of life; fantastic creatures, Medicine Men, Reed People, Badger People, Rainbow People who decorated themselves with silver and turquoise, eagle feathers and spruce twigs, and danced their way through religious ceremony and ritual.

Then the Spaniards, late-comers of four hundred years ago, the silly greedy caballeros, the first rubbernecks, whose protruding eyes stared at the sunny, sandy hills and imagined

them to be all gold ; whose simple, vulgar European minds listened to tales of rich cities *somewhere* in the interior, and who, canning themselves in armour, and decorative in heavy clothes, rushed off excitedly to steal all the silver and gold and precious stones they could lay hands on. But they did not rush for long. The deserts stripped them, killed many, and sent the rest back to Mexico City.

But the Spaniards persisted, and with the help of priests Don Juan de Onate led in the first settlers, twenty-two years before the Pilgrim Fathers landed in the East, and much to our pleasure and pride he established his capital, San Gabriel, quite near our clay rooms. With difficulties, and fights with Indians, the Spanish settlers flourished, old Spanish aristocrats with grants of hundreds of acres of land became "cattle barons". But they, as sensational successes, passed away, and only the Indians and the humble, working Spaniards remain. Gold Rushers and Stock Raisers played out that incredible check-shirted, six-shooter life on this sunny stage, but the gold was mostly illusion and the greedy Stock Raisers ruined the scanty pasture by overstocking it. They have passed, and the United States army crossed the scene, rounded up the wandering Indians and broke the Mexican control, and now the railway brings the tourists and the artists, who, like us, blow up into emotional drunkards and do strange things. And still the Indians dance as they danced long before all these vulgar people played out their vain little plays. The adventurers have gone, but the tourists remain. There is plenty of room for them at present, but eventually, I suppose, they will eat up all the beauty and the interest of this simple life like a plague of locusts—unless the careless economic fabric behind them suddenly fails to provide the sinews of *tourisme*, and the land of deserts will be left to the dancing Indian and the Spanish-Mexican-

Indian-American medley of smallholders content to work at a simple self-subsistence level.

We could not help reading this history as the books had been lent to us, and we were afraid our friends would catechise us, but it was necessary to get an explanation of this foreign world, and in these histories were fascinating stories that became very real, read in the scene the bulk of which remains unchanged from the remote time when the Indians first strolled in.

We began to accumulate some vague ideas about these Indians, too. I began with hazy recollections of Fenimore Cooper, and worse, slightly deranged by Buffalo Bill and our own imaginative Indian games. We had encountered some careless instruction about hunting and fighting Indians, their cruelty and treachery, but no instruction whatever about these Pueblo Indians of New Mexico who had progressed from being cliff dwellers to builders of communal houses holding hundreds of people, and who were skilled potters, without wheels, weavers, leather dressers, and cultivators of the soil, and had developed a highly religious ritual and ceremony without which they could hardly move. There were solemn tribal initiations, and ritualistic inductions into the mysteries of life and religion. They prayed for rain, they prayed when they sowed seed, planting symbolic prayer wands in the fields. They hunted, killed, and scalped ceremoniously, and blessed new houses with scattering sacred meal and murmuring prayers. They carried in their heads traditional lore and wisdom; they had a poetic version of the gradual evolution of the world, and to read their stories, recorded by various ethnologists, is to move in a cultured world of sacred duty, heroism, dignity and kindliness. Above all they decorated themselves magnificently with pagan symbols and danced their inexpressible communica-

tions to the Great Powers—danced all the important, subtle knowledge and convictions of human consciousness, which can never be numbered one, two, and three, and expressed scientifically, but can only be expressed in some form of art—that is what art is for—to communicate suggestively and impressionistically the most important facts of life—the rest, you can get in the newspapers. And these Indians danced the meaning of Life, which stood out as plain as a pikestaff in this desiccated world where to live at all it was imperative to be wise in first principles. Why, I ask, as Christian children were we not taught to dance like these Indians, instead of being encouraged to screech and murder each other in imitation of a false picture of most American Indians.

As to the reputation of thieving and treachery which we associate with American Indians, listen to Kit Carson, the great pioneer, trapper, and diplomat, who had forty years' experience of trading, living and fighting with Indians. He declared that *all* Indian troubles were caused originally by bad white men, and he was terribly severe on the barbarities of the border. He said he was once among Indians for two or three years exclusively, and had seen an Indian kill even his brother for insulting a white man. He protested that in all the peculiar and ingenious outrages for which Indians had been so much abused, they were only imitating or improving upon the bad example of wicked white men. He pleaded for the Indians as "pore ignorant critters" who were being despoiled daily of their hunting grounds and homes, and his denunciations were sometimes exceedingly eloquent. Said he: "To think of that dog Chivington and his hounds up thar at Sand Creek! Who ever heard of sich doins among Christians! They'd bin out several days huntin' hostile Injuns and couldn't find none nowhar, and if they had they'd run from 'em, you bet! So they just

pitched into these friendlies, and massacred them—yes, sir, literally massacred them in cold blood, in spite of our flag thar—women and children even! ”

In spite of quizzing tourists, the investigations of ethnologists, the admiration of artists, the zeal of educationists, the offers of commercial exploiters, and the fact that they are nominally Catholics, the present-day Pueblo Indians go about their work and continue their ritualistic dances, more or less, in their own way. They have their own councils to a large extent, and do not vote with the United States electorate. With poker faces they let the white world seethe around them, accept a little of it that seems useful—a white wife or two, some dollars for pottery, blankets, and silver work, Catholicism and threshing machines—but they seem to let the mass of it go by. Their survival is mostly accident, I suppose, the commercial age being too busy knocking other Indians on the head and stealing their lands to worry about these aboriginal farmers in the unprofitable and arid South-West. The early Spaniards were not strong enough to crush them entirely, and the Catholic missionaries were wise enough to allow their paganism to exist side by side with the adoption of a Christian Church. The Pueblo Indians themselves must have a good deal of character. Their faces suggest it, grave, poker faces that can develop into aged wrinkled features, sensitive, that suggest a wealth of kind and humorous wisdom. But how much of their admirable life is due to accident, to tradition, to a lack of opportunity to do anything else, or to real worth, or to all these factors is speculation.

One morning the wooden Ford 'bus was packed with crackers, hard-boiled eggs and a basket of peaches, and Anne, a peach in one hand and the car in the other, drove us off to see the Great Corn Dance at the pueblo of Santo

Domingo. This is the main tourist sport in New Mexico—driving over the deserts to the Indian ceremonies—wonderful drives of anything up to a couple of hundred miles. You feel a bit of a fool and slightly vulgar, but the South-West is large and can stand a good deal of that sort of thing.

We cleared Chamita and Española, and travelled the lovely road to Santa Fé, by the golden hills in the valley backed by the mountains, a delicate blue and gold in the sun, but deep indigo where a storm gathered round some peak and shot streaks of lightning out of the heavy clouds. The landscape is so large that we could see three separate thunderstorms at once, each one a complete, mighty drama, but trifles in the vast expanse. As we climbed to Santa Fé the spots of juniper bushes on the desiccated hills grew closer together under the influence of a little more rain; you can trace this development of the influence of rain as you go towards the mountains; the spots of bushes grow thicker, the bushes begin to get bigger until they make shapely miniature trees, and, finally, you arrive in a forest of mighty pines.

Santa Fé was very alive as we drove through, gay and alive with an interesting mixture of Spanish, Mexican-Spanish, Mexican, Indian and American people—Fernandez and Santiagos, Joses and Jesuses, Hanks and Spuds—all wandering in the tree-planted square and under the adobe walls. There were numbers of what looked like cowboys, too, but do not be deceived. If, in Santa Fé, you see a handsome young fellow, probably bearded, dressed in blue jean trousers supported by a dollar belt decorated with fifty dollars' worth of Navaho silver, a large checked shirt, a yellow kerchief round his throat, a vast hat on his head, and Navaho silver bracelets and rings all over both hands, and a silver and turquoise necklace round his neck, if, I say, you

should see such a figure do not imagine he is a cowboy—no, he is an artist or a poet indulging in the emotional intoxication that seizes such fish in this operatic world. I like it. I had a pair of blue jean pants myself, but—I could not afford the silver.

From the busy bazaar of Santa Fé we moved out, by the pretty adobe Indian school, to the austere, desiccated desert again, changed this side of the town to a flatter country with strange, flat-topped hills, and red rocks appearing among the pink and golden. Somewhere about thirty miles before us lay the pueblo of Santo Domingo, and we drove on over the uninhabited *llano*, over the sun-baked clay soil, scrubby with a sparse, wiry growth. It was hot and strange, an endless primitive world of shining, brilliant beauty exulting in the quivering sunlight.

We turned from the highway and took a rough track over the sand, bumping among the cacti and the sage-green scrub until suddenly we saw the Indian village below us, the lines of clay houses round large squares, a clay town set in the arid sands, baking in the open sun, with no sign of cultivation near it. But below the village is the river and the Indian corn, and on the other side the mountains rise to the forests. We bumped on down the hill, over a wide arroyo, winding down to a large dusty plaza, where the car was parked with hundreds of others. We walked under the high, blank walls of the clay church, joined a stream of Indians and tourists and passed under some cottonwood trees where a gaudy group of Indians were displaying their pottery for sale. The faint throb of a drum was in the air—the Indians were dancing.

In the village an incredibly bright crowd thronged the dusty ways between the squat clay houses. The tourists were in their brightest, the cowboy artists in their bravest,

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and jingling with silver, but the Indians outshone them all in their white moccasins, gaudy cottons, and their own woven shawls and blankets, vivid in colour and fierce with patterns like streaks of lightning. Throb—throb—throb. The insistent drum was louder, and we were drawing nearer to the dance.

We came on it suddenly round the corner of a clay house—an overwhelming vision of colour and sun, a dusky regiment of dancers moving with the beating drum, in a crowd of spectators lining the golden plaza, on balconies, on house-tops—a gaudy galaxy of pink, green, orange, and blue figures standing out against the luminous sky. It was a *riot of colour*, radiant sun and heat that sent us rocketing to the zenith of exhilaration.

Throb—throb—throb. So, they were dancing the ancient ritual. You could see they were dancing, two long lines of dusky, strange figures stamping the earth, while costumes, bits of fur, or long black hair, or plaited strings bobbed up and down as the figures stamped. But someone gets in your way; a head of black hair bound with a green ribbon moves to within two or three inches of your eyes. You follow down the figure to a purple shirt, a silver belt, blue denim pants, and moccasins—it is an Indian man. Slightly to the left is a severe profile, the brown, high cheek-boned face of the ideal Indian chief, a shabby dignified figure swathed in a black cotton shawl, and wearing dirty, business-like moccasins. Not a Pueblo Indian, but a visiting Indian come over the desert from some other tribe. Between the heads you see a bit more of the dancing lines, and you move to a clearer view.

Throb—throb—throb. The drum goes on, and you suddenly see the drummer, a serious-faced Indian, wearing a belted purple shirt with tails out, holding a long blue and

yellow drum with one hand, and drumming down with the other, a quick vigorous drumming that in spite of its monotone is alive with a bounding rhythm, a fierce, exulting throb that goes on and on, rises and falls, and bursts out anew. We have heard him drumming for half an hour, but he will go on for two hours, until another takes his place—the bright, isolated figure, beating, beating, beating in the burning sun. One of the dancers catches your eye, a dusky man with bare arms and torso, a white kilt flapping to his knees, a gourd rattle in one hand, a twig of green spruce in the other, twigs of green spruce stuck into brighter green armlets, and a skunk fur flapping out behind like a tail. He is beautiful, his face lost in solemnity, turned to the earth with downcast eyes while he stamps out the dance, marking time in a high step, pounding the earth to awaken the living forces, pounding the earth as the drummer pounds the drum—the drum spurs on the dancers, and the dancers spur on the drum. There is a line of fifty or sixty such men, and opposite them a line of women.

Curse the tourists! Some more get in the way, two ghastly girls in sun goggles, platinum hair and filthy scarlet lips. Common, badly-shaped things, flopping against each other. "Is that all they do—just go on like that!" whines one of them. And the other simpers: "I do think those skunk trimmings are cute!" You shift again.

The line of erect Indian women sways slightly to the throbbing rhythm. They wear a black dress that leaves one soft brown shoulder and one arm bare. Turquoise blue tablets stand upright on their heads, a queer ornament fretted with symbols for lightning and rain; they hold twigs of spruce fir, which is symbolic of eternal life and honoured as a rain-bringer, and their bare feet shuffle the earth from which they draw fertility for all living things. Demure,

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with downcast eyes, the straight women shuffle to the men's vigorous stamping.

Although you have heard a chanting accompaniment you have hardly realised that there is a choir of about fifty singers—fifty men, their long hair bound with coloured ribbons, fifty men in every conceivable colour of shirt and baggy, printed cotton knickers, their ribboned heads bowed together in a close crowd, all waving a piece of green spruce, and dancing as they sing with absorbed expression. A great, grey-haired old man in white shirt and pantaloons—a patriarch—dances and sings with more fervour than any of them. Hi-yah—Hi-yah—Hi-yah you seem to hear, and queer gutturals and high notes that rise and fall in a tuneless tune.

Suddenly the throb of the drum drops to a slower beat, the dance dies with it—not a false step in those long lines—and then the drummer, reversing his drum, quickens the beat on a higher note, beating up the vigorous dance again. The two lines approach, mingle and wheel in circles, while a yellow and scarlet figure dips and sways a long, decorated pole, tipped with yellow feathers, over the crowd, symbolising the sun, the coming down of rain, encouraging all growth and fertility. The gourds rattle and the green spruce waves, and the whole crowd of dancers, absorbed in this communion with the unseen powers upon which their lives depend, begins to move slowly down the plaza, inch by inch, moving, dancing, swaying and singing to the throbbing rhythm. It is their life recorded in a dance—the sowing of seed, the movement of falling rain, the up-springing corn, the swaying of corn in the wind, movement, growth and development, conception, fertility and birth—it is all there, the only things that matter in the life of man.

Again the lines come out, and the dance returns up the

plaza, women shuffling demurely behind the stamping men, the golden-feathered sun-pole waving and swaying, and half a dozen strange, almost naked figures, their bodies smeared in black and white stripes, wreath in and out freely among the formal lines ; these are the Koshare, spirits of the dead, weird figures, with a pointed top-knot of dry corn husks, and faces masked with white and with square black dots for eyes. They are—what? Spirits of the dead, clowns, free satirical figures, that in certain ceremonies clown satirical criticisms on members of the clan, purge away faults of the tribe with illuminating ridicule. In the Corn Dance these formidable figures, heads in air, stamped their way proudly up and down the lines, attending to disarranged costumes, encouraging the children, who were in the dance, too, tiny figures in full costume, following out all the intricate steps and the symbolic wavings of gourd and spruce.

One Koshare gave a wild howl, the others gathered round, and they broke through the dance to approach the crowd. The next minute a Koshare had a camera in his hand, another opened it, and a roll of films was flourished in the destroying sun. The camera was handed back to the tourist—and, the films, and the Koshare stalked back to the dance. These Santo Domingo Indians have a reputation for being intractable. They will not be photographed. They also destroyed some notes an author was making—not mine! I almost wished that they had destroyed some of the tourists—but not me!

The incident is over and they are all dancing again, and once more the regiment moves slowly down the plaza, down down by inches until the drum ceases, the dance breaks and the dancers climb the ladder of their kiva, the dark buried council chamber, and disappear one by one through

the hole in the roof. From the kiva at the other end of the plaza another drum bursts out, another chorus chants and leads the way for a second clan of dancers that fills the dusty square with their stamping. At the end of the day the two clans join, and dance the final appeal together.

As the second group swung into rhythm and step, a cloud came over the sun and a sudden wind rushed into the village. In one moment we were all buried in dust, lost to each other in a furious dust storm. The dancers turned into misty phantoms and finally disappeared in the swirling clouds, but the drum still throbbed—the dance must go on. We turned for the shelter of the car, and covering our faces from the stinging dust we blundered into unseen people. We ran into Indians, stepped on their exhibitions of pottery and blundered into clay walls, with smarting eyes, stinging faces and mouths full of sand we reached the car at last, and sat for over an hour while the flying dust scratched and peppered the windows, and obliterated the world.

The wind dropped as suddenly as it came, the sand went back to the earth, and when we opened the car the first thing we heard was the throb—throb—throb of the drum, and going back to the plaza we found the dancers absorbed in the ceremony as if oblivious of the storm and everything else. Again we were caught up by the intense, solemn feeling supported by the throbbing rhythm ; the storm did not matter, we feeble, ill-assorted tourists did not matter ; those lines of erect, dignified figures, carrying themselves with wholesome sensuousness, emerged supreme. With down-cast eyes and immobile features, as if absorbed in an intense effort to draw out the intangible forces of fertility and flourishing growth, these beautiful, vigorous creatures stamped upon the yielding earth. Beat—beat—beat all day

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long, while the burning sun turned in the sky. Beat—beat—beat, hour after hour, until everyone, and everything above the earth and under the earth is caught up in the mighty pulsing, and carried along exulting and exhilarated on the throbbing heart of Life itself.

XVIII

SHOW IN A PUEBLO

THE great Corn Dance of Santo Domingo is only one of the dances of one pueblo. Other dances and ceremonies go on all the year round, Eagle Dances, Hunting Dances, Turtle Dances, Christmas Dances, Snake Dances, Pine Dances, Buffalo, Deer, and Antelope Dances, all in different costumes, and in different pueblos at different points of the compass. Imagine, then, the time these tourists, writers, and artists have. They drive or ride over the fabulous country, down golden valleys, over mountain passes, through red canyons, eat *enchiladas*, *tamales*, and *chili con carne*, drink high-balls, and enjoy the emotional intoxication of the dance displays. And after all this, after returning to their own charming adobe houses, they do not fail to indulge in their own ceremonies and parties, which, to our English ears, sounded very like "porties".

Dorothy had a "party" one night, a house-warming in a new studio which her gardener had built in the garden in his odd time. In between opening the sluices of the ditch and irrigating the garden, planting corn and cucumbers, and tending peaches, strawberries, and grapes, he just piled up the adobe bricks, put the *vigas*—the peeled tree-trunk roof beams—across the top, put more clay over the boards, and there was a beautiful studio, a golden cabinet of art, standing in the corner of the garden.

Of course, we put up the puppet theatre for the party, and Dorothy's fine pictures, which she took down again,

and then the cars began roaring up with the guests. We were what is called, I think, a heterogeneous company—Britishers, New Yorkers, a gentle cowboy and his wife, a Russian, a picture dealer, the gardener and his wife, a Soil Conversation official, some respectable New Mexico residents, and some New Mexico artists, these latter bringing with them a band, that is to say two hearty lads, a non-stop combination of guitar and fiddle, that sat in the fireplace, and, once started, continued to gladden the night with buoyant Spanish dances and songs. The “party” began, as all such parties must, with well-iced high-balls, and I think we made a pretty picture in that long, beautiful room of Dorothy’s, with the red Spanish chairs against the white-wash, the black piano, and the handsome Indian rugs everywhere. The cowboy was about the most respectable, but the New York artist was more beautiful in a deep red checked shirt, riding knickers, and tooled top-boots with tiny heels. The rest of us were more or less ordinary—but, silky, and bright. We sat around on the Indian rugs and red chairs, clinking the ice in the high-balls, talking about Indians, Soil Conservation, and hoping for Santa Fé scandal, and we stood through a buffet supper of fried chicken, olives and salads, sandwiches, cheese crackers, strawberries and cream, fruit salads, good old “Canada Dry”, and iced beer, and, primed into a condition in which no one could grumble, we walked across the garden (beware of the irrigation ditches in the dark) for the puppet performance. Resisting with an iron will the *mañana* effect of New Mexico heat and altitude, the puppets pulled through to a very cheerful house, particularly in the more vulgar parts. There had been a very shy girl at the party who had spoken not at all, and at the puppet show had begun with keeping her eyes to the floor, but we account it a real triumph that

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eventually she looked up, laughed, and lost herself in the performance.

After the show the guitar and fiddle, and the dancing began, spirited dances, mixed with waltzes and tangos, and an occasional sad, hoarse Latin song with one very small tune and a large number of verses. The Spanish-American gardener and his wife, Henry and Jeannie, emerged as the star dancers to the Spanish tunes, such as the pretty figure-dance of three dancers joined by two handkerchiefs, and a carpet dance, in which the lady coquettes behind a rug, warding off the madly dancing man, who circles round her with a rapid rat-tat-tat-tat of heel and toe. It was real dancing, the leaping, quick-stepping kind, urged on by the deep thrum, thrum of the guitar and the easy-running fiddle.

There were those who amused themselves by bumping into the more sedate couples, and in breaking loose to execute an inspired *pas seul*, a frolicking which led one young man to announce :

“ I’m going to do an aesthetic dance! I want to do an aesthetic dance! I *will* do an aesthetic dance—who shall stop me? ” he challenged, pulling off his necktie with a magnificent gesture of wicked abandonment. He flung off his coat, slipped his braces, and began removing his pants, but shrieks of protest sent him behind the respectable curtains of our puppet theatre. His shirt soon appeared over the proscenium, and then his pants, which, naturally, were immediately stolen and hidden, and the aesthetic dance turned into the young man, wrapped in a Navaho rug, wandering about looking for his garments. An excellent performance.

We went to other parties in the pleasant whitewashed rooms furnished with Spanish chairs and tables, and Indian

and Chimayo rugs, and with collections of Indian pottery, the pretty punched-tin candle sconces and mirror frames, and old home-made saints—interesting houses, bright with the simple native crafts. At one house the gardener was an Indian, and after supper he brought three of his boys to dance to the guests. Joe Garcia had changed his blue jean pants for moccasins, fringed leather and feathers; he took his stand among the fireflies on the lawn, tapped his drum, and began to sing a high-pitched quavering song, when, with a jingle of bells, two of the boys bounded on to the lawn, two bright glittering figures, bent-legged and bent-backed, stamping and twirling with quick and slow steps, two gyrating baubles of painted bodies, bright feathers and bells. The third boy, aged two, with painted torso and feathers complete, toddled after his brothers; he could hardly walk, and his dancing was his own, but curiously in time and rhythm—he learns to walk and dance at the same time.

After the dance the two boys, under a good deal of persuasion and encouragement, came up to us and announced in duet, “We want to see a puppet show, please!” and then turned, and ran.

“Well, one good turn deserves another”; but being mere intellectual whites we had nothing in us to compare with the magnificent dancing art of the Indians, living art, not theatrical art at a shilling the time. At our most dignified we could show them some folk-songs and a bit of Shakespeare—and what was the wondering, speculating Shakespeare to these Indian dances, this complete, definite expression, compacted of working for a living and philosophy, of sun and air, and of the headlong forces on which we have to live. Shakespeare suddenly looked theatrical, an expression limited to a convention that would mean nothing to

full-blooded pagans who lived on intimate terms with all the great gods and devils. But hoping the Indians have their lighter moments we went to see Joe in the San Juan pueblo to arrange a performance.

The Indian pueblo is adjacent to the village of Chamita, but is a complete community of its own—three squares surrounded by the squat clay houses. We walked in, between the church and the store, and stumbled over a woman kneeling before a messy little fire of ashes and bits of tin. She lifted a sheet of tin with a stick and disclosed several little clay pots which, she explained, were cooked.

These pueblo people have been great potters ; they used to keep their corn and meal in large, handsome clay jars decorated with strange angular devices of lightning serpents, thunder birds, symbolic suns, and growing corn. Nowadays they have turned to galvanised pails and store cartons, but the Association of Indian Affairs has encouraged the revival of this craft, and others, for supplying the ordinary channels of commerce. The South-West shops are full of Indian pottery ; it goes all over the continent ; it is sold to tourists in the pueblos, and the Indians build bowers of green boughs along the highways and peddle it to travellers. They still make these round-bellied pots without a wheel, coiling up the shape with long strips of clay which is smoothed out with the fingers, and scrapers.

This woman took a fired pot and showed us how she polished it, smearing the biscuit with a red, wet clay which she pressed home with a smooth pebble, pressed and rubbed until it became a smooth shining surface. She is the mother of several children, a typical village woman, but so ingrained is this skill in pottery-making that in a year or two she was making very shapely pots, all built up from coils of clay and truly rounded without a potter's wheel. She could

invent designs on the traditional themes, and draw them on the pots with a firm hand and an unerring instinct for design. Her girls were learning to be potters, too, and already made clever little bears and beavers in simplified, but firm lines.

As we went on to Joe's house we passed a woman baking bread, a pretty performance, the bright, costumed figure poking the loaves into the oven, an adobe dome about five feet high. The ovens stand all round the plaza like large bee-hives made of clay. The fire is kindled inside the oven itself, the ashes raked out, and the dough deposited in the heated chamber in the classic country way.

Joe was in his one room with some of his eleven children—"Work! I work for dem all de time," he announced cheerfully and all smiles, and evidently very fond of his family. We were a little nervous in Joe's house because his wife has the reputation of being a witch. It is supposed that the Indians do not like witchcraft, and there are tales of severe beatings, and worse, for any member of the pueblo suspected of occult practices. The rumour was that Joe's brother-in-law had married a woman of some other village and had gone to live there many miles away. But Joe's wife did not like this wife who had carried her brother so far away, and what simple expedient do you suppose she resorted to in order to get even with the nasty sister-in-law? Why, she simply changed herself into a cat at night, flew over fifty miles of country, and howled outside the brother's menage. I could not see anything to object to in that, but the brother was so annoyed by the persistent yammering of the cat that, one night, he up with his gun, fired, and wounded it. The cat never came again to annoy them—but the next morning Joe's wife was lame! You would need great faith in witchcraft to believe that tale, and seeing that

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Joe's wife had borne eleven children in about the shortest possible time, you would have thought that a less round-about reason for her lameness would have been discovered.

Joe was enthusiastic as to a performance, and wanted it in two or three days' time, but we had to put it off for about a week, and during that time received continual messages from him—we hadn't forgotten the show, had we? Did we remember it was to be at seven-thirty? We were doing it for the pueblo, wer'n't we? It was to be for the Indians, wasn't it?

Even in New Mexico day follows day, and at the right time we began setting up the theatre in the dry, dusty plaza outside Joe's house. It was an appropriate pitch with electric light in the house which we could tap and a wood-pile in front for the audience. The sun was going down and a mellow light flooded the golden plaza, which, with its two or three grey-green trees, looked beautiful. A faint and persistent drum tap came from the mysterious kiva, and a file of women wandered across, all in the high white boots, the dresses with a broad, coloured hem, the bright cotton shawls, and all carrying baskets on their heads. Some black-haired and black-eyed children squatted in the dust and watched us, talking volubly in Indian, and some boys were playing at marbles. The sun went down and a large moon came up; the short twilight deepened, and by the time the theatre was ready a warm moonlight flooded the ancient houses.

Meanwhile the audience gathered, the bright costumed women sitting on the wood-pile, the men and young people standing around or squatting in the dust. There were some fine old men, with grave, wrinkled faces, their ribbon-bound pigtails falling in front of their shoulders, their heads covered with large straw or felt hats.

We turned on the lights, and began rather nervously this very English performance to an audience who were more accustomed to Indian or Spanish than American. But we need not have worried ; some of the words must have been meaningless to them, but they could read the action, which they did very quickly. The Indians are not hearty laughers ; they smile broadly and shake silently, but they made a lot of noise as the scenes progressed, giving vent to " ahs " and " ayes " with their laughter. The English folk-songs appealed to them strongly ; the song in which the soldier accepts presents from a girl and then refuses marriage because he has a wife of his own delighted them—and they must have very quick minds, for after the performance some of the children were singing a very good impression of the song—words and tune.

The performance ended, we were asked to leave the theatre light as they would like to give some dances in return for the performance. So in the light of the theatre and the lights of a few cars, we had several dances given by young men, while four or five others tapped the drum and chanted. The costumes were brilliant in the artificial light, and the dancers wove their curious figures over the dust with great effect. The San Juan pueblo is getting—well, it is not so simple as it has been. In place of bare bodies smeared with ochre or meal these youths wore tights, which were actually the normal underwear of cowboys, dyed bright yellow and green. For the rest they had a sort of shield at the back made of long, dyed feathers, radiating from a small, central mirror, with touches of green and pink worsted. They wore a small, embroidered apron back and front, and had chains of silver bells from waist to ankle, and bells on their moccasins. They were showy costumes, clever phantasies, and all made by themselves, but store goods are em-

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ployed, and in the galaxy of colour you will sometimes recognise a Chinese silk scarf, a Polish-looking handkerchief, or strips of Czech embroidery.

After the packing we were asked into Joe's house—a living-room with a linoleum floor, a bed in one corner, Catholic oleographs on the walls, and an Indian Katchina figure—the sort of thing we used to call idols. Joe's wife, grave and dignified, was sitting on the bed in her cotton wrap, and two youths with a drum also. It was rather startling when the youths on the bed began to beat the drum, went into a sort of trance, and began to howl like—well, like savages in a desert. Another slim, brown boy, dressed in nothing much but a tight-fitting yellow cap with a protruding bird's beak, and two great eagle wings stretched along his arms, began an Eagle Dance. He stood erect, swaying, the great wings outstretched, like a hovering eagle surveying the world beneath. Then he began to dance, in bird-like motions, flying, gliding, and stopping again to make the proud survey; he swooped across the room to crouch in a corner, he hopped, turned, and skimmed across the room again. It was a clever naturalistic study of a bird carried out gracefully by the slim, brown boy, and impressive enough to make you forget the ugly linoleum, and the fact that two howling savages in a trance were sitting on the iron bedstead. Joe's eyes were glued to his son's feet, as he watched the dance steps with nervous care—evidently, they had been carefully worked out and designed, or that boy could never have moved so intricately and gracefully in the small space. All the Indians watched with intense black eyes, all except the twos and threes who, with incredible solemnity, were holding a dance of their own in a corner.

We went home down to the river bank, over the soft,

sandy road, back to the little clay house in the field, a mellow moonlight revealing the vast, muted world that seemed only half asleep under a moon that was bright enough to show the colours of the zinnias outside our door.

ACOMA—THE CITY OF THE SKY

EVERY morning was as lovely as the last when we awoke in the little clay house, the same sense of idle perfection, of warmth and loveliness, without anxiety and without incentive. It was all so simple, the beds with only sheets, the clean wood floor with only a couple of mats to shake, and outside the sun ripening the peaches and strawberries, the grapes and raspberries in such profusion that they could never all be eaten. We would wander round to the well and draw some water, while the large butterflies and small humming birds flittered over the hollyhocks and sunflowers, all wrapped in the radiant sun, and so lovely that there was no need to move or do anything.

One morning a tiny girl wandered from behind the well, and shyly handed to Winifred two large pears.

"Yes, are these for me?" said Winifred, and the child nodded, and stood silently.

"What lovely pears—it is kind of you to bring them to me."

The child opened its mouth to speak, and then closed it again. Obviously she had something to say, but there was no hurry—the air was warm and idle, and she was shy, or had forgotten her English.

"Do you like candy?" No response.

"Look, wait a minute and I'll get some candies!" No response.

"Now, would you like these?" No response—but the

small mouth opened again, and closed and then tried again. Winifred put the candy in her hand, and the mite turned and walked away. She was back again in a minute, and stood silently before us once more.

“What is it? Do you want something?”

It was coming. The child took a deep breath, sighed, filled her lungs again, and at last said :

“Matches—fader wan’ some matches!”

So that was it—Father wanted some matches, and given a box the infant turned and disappeared among the sunflowers.

It was barter—you wanted matches, and you sent the kid off with a couple of pears to the neighbours. So much easier than rushing off to the village, and perhaps you hadn’t any money, so you just pulled a couple of pears off the tree and sent the mite off among the sunflowers to barter them for some vague amount of matches. It was suited to the morning ; it was just about as much business and transaction as all that fragile loveliness could stand. Two pears for some matches, and go on hanging about eating peaches in the sun.

And yet we did move, and we did do things, and the Ford ’bus, loaded with the never diminishing peaches, with Esther, and with us, would be driven by Anne away to new wonders. Our valley was very large, and full of wonders, but as soon as we rounded a hill, or climbed over a hill, we would pass into another world—the same desert country—but, somehow, different. One morning we drove through the golden hills, and mounted a deserted road on the side of the valley. It rose through a rocky, desiccated glen, and carried us to a high *mesa*, one of the long flat tablelands that abound in this country. Once over the edge we were in a different atmosphere. Clouds had gathered over the near

mountains, and, instead of the golden country, we had before us grey skies and deep green forest. The *mesa* was carpeted with a sparse, long grass, and after a good deal of this we passed into a pine forest, circling round a hill to another valley, full of trees, and rising from the trees a long, perpendicular cliff of golden rock.

This was Puye, a city of cliff dwellings that had been deserted hundreds of years ago, and we climbed the steep, hot path up to the foot of the cliff, and peeped into the rounded little caves where very primitive Indians had once lived. Natural steps led to a sort of second floor, a ladder in a *cheminee* led to a third row of caves, and above that, worn, natural steps in the cliff face took us to the flat top of the precipice, where a large, broken honeycomb of walls lay before us. This was the remains of a communal house of small chambers into which the Indians had retired at night for safety from other marauding Indians. Only the ground floor is left, and the central placita, with some of the ancient worn stones on which the corn was ground by hand. A bit of painted pottery caught our eye, a potsherd of some impossible age, and we glued our eyes to the ground in hopes of finding a flint arrow head, or a turquoise ornament.

It was absorbing, and we wandered about, searching and searching. What excitement when someone found another piece of ancient pot, and then another, and another! And, finally, what a thrill when we came upon a whole mass of bits of broken painted clay, rejected out first finds, hunted feverishly for bigger and better shards, and boasted to each other about our finds. Poking about among some bushes Winifred leapt to her feet with a shout, and we rushed expecting to see a complete bowl, or an Indian skeleton, but it turned out to be a horned toad, a spiky, intricate little beast that anyone could see was really a dragon, shrunk

small from shyness of the modern world, and hiding under a stone from the noisy tourists. It was difficult to tear ourselves away from the high crest of Puye, with the green and blue forests ranging on one side, and on the other far below us, like a small pale silk painting, lay the golden, desert valley and the Sangre de Cristo mountains. But, rattling with ancient potsherds, we descended at last, away from the dreams of ancient Indians and the faint lovely vision of sun on the desert hills.

Again we climbed a hill from the Rio Grande, a serpentine mountain road, cut from the towering cliff at times, and again came to a new country, the Bandelier National Monument, wild, barren, and huge, with tremendous perpendicular cliffs, deep rocky ravines, and bits of desert sand and scrub, with an animal's skull here and there, white and clean in the dry air. We crossed a high, green *mesa*, descended another serpentine road, and came down into the ravine of the Rito de los Frijoles, the famous cave settlement which was the subject of Bandelier's novel *The Delight Makers*. Adolf F. Bandelier spent eight years, round about 1880, in ethnological and archaeological study among the Pueblo Indians, and he lived in the pueblo of Cochiti, whose inhabitants had a dim tradition that their ancestors lived at Frijoles in these cliff dwellings. Bandelier had eight years in which to play in this world, but we only had an hour or so, and we walked beneath the precipice on the rocky path that runs by the numerous caves, and the tumbled remains of stone and adobe rooms that had been built in front of the caves. Erosion has worked the friable rock into queer pillars, pierced them with holes, and left natural bridges between the tall pinnacles. We collected more ancient potsherds and pieces of obsidian, and sheltered in one of the small round caves from a storm, listening to

the thunder rolling voluminously in this deep ravine, with the bald cliff and its caves on one side and a forest of pines on the other. Deserted for more than a thousand years, the ruins still seem alive with a sense of habitation, as if at any minute the two thousand Indians who lived here might pad back on their moccasins from a fight with the other cliff dwellers over at Puye. The inhabitants of the ravine at present are a C.C.C. camp, and a chalet inn that gave us firm, satisfying home-made bread to eat, the first good bread we had eaten in the States.

Once again we climbed to Santa Fé and rode out over the deserts southwards, to Acoma, a hundred and fifty miles of changing country. We left Chamita in the afternoon, and after Santa Fé drove through rather less exciting country until we reached Albuquerque, with an elevation of only five thousand feet where the air was thick and sultry after the high, light atmosphere of Santa Fé. Albuquerque is the chief business town of New Mexico, and has more stone and cement than adobe buildings. The neon lights were flashing as we came in from the desert, and as we searched vainly for a space among the cars lining all the roads, it almost seemed like New York after the wide, open spaces. We dined in the Fred Harvey restaurant at the station, one of the series of station restaurants built so cleverly and amusingly in the Santa Fé adobe style, and we went to *The King's Rest* for the night. This is a shining example of the Tourist Cabin development. It consists of about a hundred adobe rooms built in pairs round a central block of more cabins, and lavatories, and shower-baths. Between each pair of rooms is a covered garage; there are pretty trees and shrubs about, an iced water fountain, and a carousel for children to play on. Our room, for which we paid about

ten shillings, was large, containing two double beds, a table and chairs, a wash basin with hot and cold water, a gas stove and two large cupboards. A family could have lodged in it and fed themselves, extremely pleasantly and inexpensively. I lift my hat to the Americans for inventing these sensible Tourist Shelters, and developing them so cleverly.

Round the corner from *The King's Rest* was a Barbecue where we breakfasted at a counter, an amusing breakfast with the cereals in separate little packets, the milk in separate little bottles, the preserves in separate little jars, and each of us perched on a separate little mushroom at the counter. And then we moved again, passed through Albuquerque and saw that it was almost built of Tourist Cabins, one after another we passed, all different sizes, shapes and prices. After the last shelter the town was snapped out of existence in a moment—we had passed into the wide, silent desert again, with an eighty mile drive to Acoma before us—Acoma—The City of the Sky—made famous to this generation of English-speaking people by Willa Cather's novel, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.

The golden kaleidoscope of the South-West clicked again, and the same desert, the same sun and dry heat, the same mountains shifted to a new design, and we rode over a wide desert bounded by long ridges of red and golden cliffs, long straight *mesas*, and small glittering blue mountains in the great distance. We waved our arms and hooted in an agony of exultation, and attempted to allay our excitement by eating peaches, or stopping the car and running round the bushes for a bit. Wherever we stopped we kicked the dry soil, and nearly always turned up Indian potsherds—there seemed hardly an inch of the barren land where these remarkable, wandering people had not lived.

At one stopping place a picturesque, shabby horseman rode up, a lean, sun-baked Spanish-looking figure of fiction. He gently and politely made some request in Spanish which left us wondering, until at last Anne, with a peach in one hand and a cigarette in the other, recognised the sound of "ahwah"—*agua*—water, and handed him the water flagon. He drank, and in handing it back, by signs and more Spanish, offered his horse for a ride. Barter, something for something, it was in his soul to return courtesy for courtesy, and having nothing else to offer presumably, he offered a ride on his horse—a tremendous offer that risked his most valuable possession being galloped away with, and himself left standing in the wide and lonely desert.

We turned from the highway at Laguna to a bumpy mud road, a thing of ruts and sandy *arroyos*, and came into a fantastic region of large rocks, like huge *sur-realiste* statues rising from the cactus and scrub, and in the distance a ragging line of red cliffs deeply scored with savage gashes. Sheep wandered in the alternating savage and gentle scene, and we watched a crowd of shepherds on horseback round up a flock for "telling". A thin stream of travellers was making for Acoma; we were in the Ford 'bus, and there were ordinary cars, trucks, four-wheeled wagons with mules, some covered, and full of cargoes of bright Spanish-Americans. We came under a massive rectangular pile of precipices, the *Enchanted Mesa*, from where, after a landslide had cut them off from their homes, the inhabitants moved to Acoma, which we could see over the desert, a long, narrow rock with the pueblo on top.

We drew up at the foot of the cliff, climbed a brigands' staircase in the rocks and coming into the village, alive with the throbbing of a drum and church bells, encountered a procession filing round the clay houses. It was a church

procession, the priest in gold and white, a saint's shrine carried aloft, and the dark Indians a gorgeous, luscious mass of colour, all purples and deep reds, blues and impossible pinks flashing in the sun. It rounded the village and drew up before the leafy bower, the temporary shrine of the Virgin erected for the ceremony. After a blessing the priest departed, and the Indians began making their obeisances in the shrine. Two men, leaning on ancient muskets, stood as sentinels on either side, and a man would approach, grasp the musket barrel with both hands, and he and the sentinel, with bowed heads, murmured—what? A prayer? An oath of vengeance? We did not know what the old muskets signified. Gaudily dressed women walked to the shrine bearing baskets of gifts on their heads, splendid barbaric figures delivering home-made loaves and packets of store foods to grand old men in the shrine, moccasined and pig-tailed elders of the church.

There was to be a dance of some sort, but the news of it was vague, and in the meantime we wandered round the village, while a drum throbbed from inside the kiva. Were the dancers rehearsing? Were they making solemn ceremonial preparations, or were they sitting round, chatting, idly tapping the drum and making jokes about the tourists? Nobody knew when the dance would be held.

Acoma is one of the miracles of the Pueblo civilisation. It is nothing but an arid rock, rising sharply from the desert, and all the soil for mortaring the house stones had to be carried up the precipitous face of the rock. But that was nothing. There is the enormous church, three hundred feet in length, and with walls forty feet high, outbuildings, a cloister and garden, and a cemetery, the earth for which took forty years to collect. The church is seventeenth century, and the village any time you like before that. Only

nine families live on the rock nowadays, the rest of the community, in these peaceful times, having built a village near the fields below the cliff. The village is just perched on this rock that stands up like a pillar in the largest and craziest piece of country that God ever made. We tried to look at it, but there is so much of it—so much view. We looked down to some distant little squares of cultivation, and then the view “steps on the gas” and just races away to a terrific and impossible expanse. Defeated, we wandered over to the church, a beautiful, great simple building rising with colossal effect against the faint map of the desert below. We walked into the dim, whitewashed interior with its painted roof beams on carved supports and delicate Indian murals on its walls, simple wash paintings of symbolic designs, and rainbows covering drawings of animals—a horse, a buffalo, or a stag—painted by Indians in their flat style. About a dozen carved and painted candle sconces, one candle in each, provide the only lighting. At the narrowing end of the great barn rises the altar screen, four large, thick cork-screw pillars, painted red and white, and cross-beams, carved, that frame pictures and decorations. It hovers in the dim light with a strong, barbaric splendour, which was heightened when we entered by five little Indian women in gaudy shawls and white moccasins standing to have their babies baptised. The priest officiated in a low voice, not a baby cried, and the women stood as rigid as statues, small, bright carvings under the great screen.

A laconic Indian accepted a donation, and asked bluntly where we came from. Something must have roused his suspicion that we were unusual specimens in the pueblo, and he looked at us shrewdly and undisguisedly curious, registering in his mind some conclusion about the English that he kept to himself. He was the man to whom a white

artist made a gushing offer of painting a presentation picture for the church—would they like it?

"I guess that'll be all right—if we like the picture!" was the Indian's reply.

The drum was still throbbing. There were no dancers, but a crowd had gathered in a tiny square overlooked by the old two-storeyed houses, and under the walls bright lines of Indians squatted on the ground exhibiting heaps of large green melons for sale, or strings of crimson chili.

Now and again Indians on horseback would appear, riding over the edge of the cliff, fine, erect figures with square shoulders, their bright shirts gleaming against the faint country below. There were Navaho Indians, descendants of that last wild tribe to be subdued in the South-West, shepherds, silversmiths and rug-weavers, their women in long full skirts of black velvet, and bolero jackets, fashioned in imitation of some old European style. Three old witches in brilliant striped blankets sat in one group, and a bunch of Apache Indians reminded one of gypsies, the women in wide, scarlet dresses, and the men in black velvet coats with silver buttons. The whole crowd was fascinating; the crumbling old houses made you look at them twice, particularly where strings of scarlet chili were hanging down the golden walls. A good deal of the crowd moved about, and at one minute you steered round a cowboy, then an Indian, and suddenly we found before us a figure in an old washed-out dungaree suit held together by a number of safety pins, and crowned by a large Mexican hat, the trousers of the suit being stuffed into top-boots out of which stuck the handle of a large knife. We were led up to this bright figure and introduced to Dorothy Brett, the friend of D. H. Lawrence, and who now paints pictures of Indians at Taos, her adopted country. There were tall, springy artist "cow-

boys ", and real cowboys in very shop-soiled garments, and wearing those curious top-boots with the very small heels.

There was a vivid " cowboy " woman—it was whispered that she had attained her fifth husband—one of those energetic, restless American women who, I have the temerity to imagine, have emerged from the strenuous pioneer days, and now, having no work to do or Indians to fight, have to work off their inherited energy and robustness in fighting a lot of husbands.

We sat on the fallen walls and waited for the dance that was a long time in coming. Two girls near us turned out to be teachers in an Indian school, one of them being a half-Cherokee, a tribe, she explained, that had a written language and a democratic form of government before the Europeans arrived on the continent.

At last the drum and the chorus came out to lead the dance, but it was disappointing ; the dances were short and the dancers few, and they had put on the barbaric trappings over silk store blouses and stiffly-creased trousers, and the girls, instead of having bare legs and feet, wore silk stockings and high-heeled shoes. I suppose the day is coming when the Indians will be ashamed of their good bodies and dances, and white people will organise Indian Dance Societies, a musician will translate the howling chants into drawing-room piano accompaniments, and we'll all say with immense satisfaction, " Wonderful people, the Indians—wonderful! "

At all events the head-dresses of these dancers were charming, delicate constructions of brilliant paper flowers and coloured feathers, and the row of stamping figures had a leader before them, who passed up and down the lines, ducking, turning and twisting with very intricate steps, and barking like a coyote at times—a rhythmic, stamping figure that left a trail of dance and form in the mind.

The dances were cut short. A thunderstorm drove us away, a complete storm like a terrible sentient being that divided the sun-lit country, drove down on the cliff, and opened its black wall in rents of savage lightning. We descended with a large part of the crowd to the cars and buggies below, running as fast as we could, young men and women striding, slipping, jumping down the narrow crack of a path up which we had climbed; the older, more timid, more fashionably-dressed, the more high-heeled, running pell-mell down the broader track that was a path of dust. Horsemen galloped past us, brushing our shoulders, sending up clouds of dust that momentarily blinded us, and as the rain became a lashing fury we thought of nothing but reaching the car. Once inside, we could see nothing, nothing of desert, of dancers or even of Acoma itself, only streams of rain that poured down our windows, making Anne murmur, "We shall be lucky if the arroyo is not impossible to cross", and the landscape nothing but a white, steaming mist.

A FORGOTTEN COUNTRY

FLOWERS and sun in the morning, miraculous travels by day, and in the evening always the pleasant dinner with our hostess. We sat on the red Spanish chairs at a red Spanish table in a mosquito-screened *portale*, and while the crickets shrilled gently to the night, we talked and ate the good produce from the garden. There were usually five of us, sometimes six, and always two of the three Alsatians, Loba and Diabola, thumped their tails on the floor. Victor, the third dog, remained in the run, having been let out once, when he jumped a six-foot fence and, just out of high spirits, killed a cow. They were intelligent dogs; they got to know us in a few days, I'm glad to say, but were always suspicious of a new garment until it had been smelt over thoroughly. For Indians, or Mexicans, they made no compromise at all, and I once had to lead a tiny Spanish girl past the run because the dogs bared their teeth and snarled and snapped like hungry wolves.

Chili-eating was one of the dinner sports. When a dish appeared on the table Dorothy and Anne went into a deep silence. They were experts, and had an uncanny perception regarding these flabby, damp envelopes that look so dull, until you put an infinitesimal piece in your mouth, when it immediately leaps to life with a million stinging, biting, pinching and burning points. How on earth chili ever came to be treated as an article of human food is difficult to imagine. The first chili-eater must have been very hungry,

or a great genius, a very subtle diviner of hidden truths. What little nourishment is in a chili can hardly be worth the pain of acquiring the vice of eating them. That it is a vice, I am sure—that deep silence of Dorothy and Anne! It was uncanny. I once saw Anne cooking a pot full of chili in the cool morning ready for the evening meal, but when we came to table there was no chili.

“Well, where is the chili we saw you cooking?” we asked, but better had we remained discreetly silent.

“Oh, chili!” said Anne, a wandering look coming into her eyes. “Chili! Oh, it’s eaten. I’m afraid I started tasting it to see if it was done, and suddenly the pot was empty!”

And corn on the cob was another dish that required a little practice. I have always been awkward with a mouth-organ, and now we had to seize magnificent corn-cobs, that seemed several feet in length, and apply them to the mouth with the fingers in the manner of that infernal instrument. Beginning to gnaw at one end you gnawed your way up the scale to the other end, and then descended the scale as smoothly and quietly as possible. They were delicious cobs, straight from the garden, varying the yellow tone according to age.

Corn—Indian corn—such quantities of it in America—sweet corn and field corn, and here in the South-West almost worshipped by the Indians. The tall plants with the long sword-like leaves and the golden tassels of bloom at the head are handsome enough, but the grain in its various colours, which were new to us, is a decorative mystery. Every house has its plait of corn-cobs, hanging down a wall or a door-post, a collection of every colour—yellow, deep red, dark blue, white, blue and white, and a variegated species made of every colour and speckled with white—a

decoration that hangs in every house like a harvest sacrifice of propitiation.

After dinner, and safely through these adventures, we drifted into the drawing-room, where Dorothy and Anne would play violin and piano, expert and lovely performances of the Masters, until Dorothy, who had been up since four in the morning, would suddenly decide to go to sleep, and at once curled up on the sofa. Anne, the result of eating chili, no doubt, would break down into a little hot-music of Gershwin.

Not all our pleasures were derived from long journeys. We could bathe in the swift Rio Grande; Esther would ride a horse over the trails at times, and we could walk on the desert, and find bleaching skulls, see prairie dogs, something like a rat, sitting as if in prayer at their sandy holes. We hoped to see coyotes, but only heard these barking at night. The large ant-hills were terrifying, and strange how the ants collected so many tiny bits of glittering quartz to make their hills with. And then the cacti began flowering, dark crimson and yellow flowers, and we walked among the tall purple bee-weed and yellow rabbit-brush, tumbleweed and sagebrush, and would come on a strange fragile flower at times, a solitary specimen enjoying its own beauty in the sandy waste.

We went a little further afield to visit Suzanne and Homer Boss, to look at their pictures, for they are both painters, and usually it was the occasion for Homer to go into the kitchen and start chipping ice into tumblers. He would bruise some mint with sugar and put it in the bottom of the vessel, then half fill it with ice, put on more mint and fill up with ice. Over this was poured whiskey until the beaker would hold no more, and it was finally garnished with sprigs of mint. You took a drink, and received a violent kick in

the neck. It was delightful. You took a second drink, and didn't care who kicked you. It was a Mint Julep, at one time a symbol of the South, and now a general favourite with all strong and daring men. After this the artful Homer would show his pictures, and naturally after Mint Julep they were the best paintings of Indians and New Mexico we ever saw. But they are good paintings, beautiful paintings of fine Indians and the heroic landscape, and a painting of an Indian, after all the hackneyed stuff that has been done of them, has to be a *very* good painting to be at all convincing nowadays. The Indians of Homer Boss are paintings as well as portraits, and a living sensitiveness creeps subtly among his brush-strokes. One evening they took us up to picnic in the moonlight on the hill before their house. In New Mexico moonlight *is* moonlight, and to make a fire on the desert, to hear Homer play *My Lodging's on the Cold, Cold Ground* on a mouth-organ, and to toast marshmallows over the fire and persuade someone else to eat them, are all memorable events. This moonlight picnic was a sort of complement to the breakfast part in Augustine Stoll's garden in the cool hours, with the desert and the hills spreading round in a faint and pale dream.

One day we went to tea with Frieda Lawrence, which was a more protracted journey—a good deal more protracted than we expected. All we knew was that the San Cristobal Ranch was somewhere near Taos, and started off on the fifty-mile journey later than we should have done. The road to Taos is exciting ; it goes through the Rio Grande Canyon, about thirty miles of savage rocks rising from the rocky river, terrible, jagged cliffs baking in the fierce sun. Emerging from this oven the road comes out on the wide tableland where, at the further side, Taos stands under the mountains. We loitered in Los Ranchos de Taos, to prowling round the

beautiful adobe church, and to see the ancient, painted screen, and the remarkably tragic statues of saints with ivory-coloured bodies, and with black hair and eyes and beards ; tragic figures that set you speculating as to what unknown hand had carved them and that communicate a strange feeling as they stand in the simple church in the desert, so few saints in so wide a world.

We loitered again in Taos for some cool refreshment and to look at the exhibition of paintings by Taos artists, and we came out with the feeling that the New Mexico artists are exaggerating the strength and violence of the country and are, perhaps, a little afraid of mentioning its subtle delicacy and loveliness. But, of course, it is an emotionally exciting country for sensitives, and you want to be painter, poet, and musician at the top of your voice all at once.

Ignoring the Indian pueblo we went on with the idea of first paying our respects to Frieda Lawrence and then returning to see this most renowned of Indian settlements. A gentle Spaniard, slow-moving and slow-speaking, pointed out the direction of San Cristobal, but after some miles another inquiry sent us back on the road, over the tableland, and we tried again. I suppose one ought to be perturbed by blunders of this kind, but here, one place or one action seemed as good as another and none of them mattered at all. The road had sunflowers all along the verges ; the forested mountains with strange cliffs rose to one side, and on the other we looked across the tableland to its edge, and beyond that on a faint insubstantial world of pale mountains composed of light that might have been the crust of the moon, it looked so unreal and so cut off by the mesa edge.

You get strange directions in this country. We had been told to go by Arroyo Hondo, but were not sure *what this* was, whether an arroyo or a village, but as we came to a very

deep arroyo *and* a village we continued the doubtful way that seemed to be going in the wrong direction. Then we saw a direction board to the Hawk Ranch and knew that we had arrived. We turned into the forest and crept slowly along the rutted track. On and on, crawling deeper and deeper into the forest, buried in trees, and then coming to an opening which only showed more and more pines, and the near steep slopes of the mountains. It was getting late and we thought of turning back, but there was nowhere to turn. The Ford 'bus lumbered up hills, crossed a running stream, and suddenly ran into a clearing with a log house, two ponies swinging their tails, and a number of people in the garden.

Frieda Lawrence greeted us warmly, and very much her spontaneous and generous self, gave us large slices of watermelon to eat and, although it was many years since we had met, picked up the conversation almost where we had left it years ago in Florence. So this was the Lawrence Ranch, but a new house had grown up alongside the original small cottage. We imagined that the forest road had buried us deep in the trees, but from the garden we looked down to the pale tableland we had crossed, and down on all those mountains of light as well. We must have been a nuisance arriving at that hour, but Frieda had swept away one tea, and had pressed her guests, I believe, to get a second tea for us, and it was good to hear her talk, to know that she was the same and could still make such characteristic comment as: "Oh, I don't ask people about their psychological states, nowadays. I ask them how much income they have, if they have any money and about their economic security. That will tell me about their psychologies."

Above the house is a steep slope of grass and flowers and on its crest a small shrine in which lie the immortal remains of D. H. L. It is a little building, white-washed inside and

decorated with an Indian mat and green pine boughs. It may have been the stirring of old associations at seeing Frieda, and Lorenzo's paintings again, but I had a strong suspicion that he was there, smiling a little sardonically, but quite pleased in his own mixed and complicated way with things as they were. It is an heroic perch in the forested mountains for the wild D.H.L. to have lived in, lonely enough and exciting enough to send him off to other conquests, charging about the world, searching, searching always for the truth. Turning back at the bottom of the hill we caught an unforgettable picture as the sun drew out the little shrine in brilliant relief against a stormy background of dark forest and a gloriously bright rainbow.

We returned through the forest, rolled on across the tableland, and came into Taos Indian pueblo as the moon was rising. The adobe takes on an almost luminous green colour in this bright moonlight, and though we had feared it would be too dark to see these two buildings of five receding storeys—the homes of the summer and winter clans—that house the seven hundred Indians, yet we saw them perfectly. It was a lovely still night, and we thought that these castle-like structures with vague Indian figures standing here and there on the high roofs, quiet and undisturbed in the moonlight, with the dark mountains behind, must have looked exactly the same any moonlight Tuesday night a thousand years ago.

But these Indians have not always been peaceful, for it was to Taos that the Indian leader Popé came to rouse the Indians to strike against their Spanish conquerors whom they hated. It is a fascinating story, how this man worked for five years, using various means to impress the Indians with his powers, such as rubbing his body with phosphorescence so that he could glow in the dark, and how because he discovered that some of his own people had been traitors

and warned the Spaniards of his plans he began his revolt a day earlier than arranged, and though it was not the swift success it would surely have been, it destroyed all the people of the Taos valley and drove the Spaniards out of it to El Paso, where they remained for some years. But these Pueblo Indians have never been fond of war, and it was only the very bad treatment of them by the Spaniards that roused them to such action. They were a highly civilised group of Indians, and it is sad that the Spaniards came before their civilisation had reached its height : it might have given the world a model it sorely needs.

To the east of the Rio Grande canyon lies a mountainous region that is, perhaps, the best preserved section of the Spanish American life of many years ago. The old Spanish ricos, the holders of great grazing tracts of mountain and wilderness, have disappeared or developed into modern business men in the South-West, but the magnificent life of lordship and peonage, of wine, women and gambling, and the elegant picturesque social life that centred in Santa Fé have vanished. But there remain the descendants of the humble settlers, the poor, independent, small ranchers, a mixture of Spanish and Indian blood that has developed into a small race of homogeneous peasants, which because of its remoteness and simplicity has been completely untouched for the last hundred years or so.

One day the Ford 'bus took us into this mountain region to Truchas, Trampas, El Valle, and Cordova, which sounds more like an expedition into Spain than to a series of villages that are little cousins of New York. We passed, first, one of the Spanish rico's houses—almost the only survival near us—a large, square house completely surrounded by a wooden balcony, from which you look down into a wealth of vege-

A FORGOTTEN COUNTRY

table and flower gardening within the adobe walls, and over the walls to the ranging golden wilderness and mountains. It is now in the possession of Miss Mary Wheelwright, a devotee of New Mexico, and the rooms are furnished with native antiques, a fine collection of rugs, carved furniture, punched tin work, and carved and painted religious figures. And was one of these a puppet with its threaded arms, legs and head, used to impress a simple people by its miraculous gestures? There was the large living-room, a beautifully proportioned place, a feature of these Spanish houses, and we imagined some beautiful girl sitting there waiting for the husband who asked little of her but to bear his children.

The mornings were getting cooler, and a faint perception of autumn stole into the summer sun as we rode through the season of crop gathering. In San Juan and Santa Cruz there was an industrious hanging out of crops. Here it was squashes hanging on a line and there halved gourds inverted on the twigs of a planted, dry branch, and every house had its streamers of crimson chili hanging from the roof edge and maize hanging in bunches under portaled roofs and sheds. The roofs of the houses, too, were in use for drying, and here and there split peaches were set out on trays, and before one or two Indian houses clay pots were set to dry. Adobe bricks by the ditch were drying, too—all these things being cured and matured for storing and use in the simple fierce heat of the sun.

From Santa Cruz we got among the sculptured sand hills and the dry arroyos, odd adobe houses, and here and there a small windowless Morada, the headquarters of a secret sect, the Penitent Brothers, a flagellant sect whose rites are terrible and primitive. In spite of an excessive and morbid curiosity on the part of others, no one knows what actually

happens in the secret chambers of the Moradas except the members of the order themselves, but many prying persons have seen the terrible procession that takes place on Good Friday. Here a cross set on a hill-top calls up visions of such a procession of the stripped Flagellantes enacting the drama of the Crucifixion in painful realism, bearing the cross, staggering under its weight, fainting from exhaustion, while the procession howls in penitence, and flay their naked backs with heavy lashes until the blood flows, backs already cut and scored with a sacrificial stone knife. Now all one sees of the figure of Christ is a wooden figure, but it was once a man who enacted even the rôle of Jesus, and it is told that even now a man has been brought home secretly at the point of death, telling no one what has taken place in the Morada. In all this mountain region one sees the crosses that are placed often on the tops of the hills. And may it be forgiven me if I thought a little cynically, perhaps, that the literature of the South-West would be much smaller if writers had not found the Penitentes so obvious and alluring a subject.

Higher and higher the road climbed, mounting by the barren ridge of a hog's back, the land of ruined desert cities to one side and the mountain forests to the other. We turned into a small valley and rode into Cordova, a village of earthen houses tucked away between the forests and the impassable wilderness. We entered one of the adobe houses and were shown the wood carvings by the inhabitants—three women and a man—who had practically no English. The carvings of animals and birds and religious figures were delightful—just the free, easy carving of European peasants, very decorative and amusing, but always beautiful, and true, in its freedom and vigour, to the parent European style. The carvings were spread out on a long table or on the floor

and when we paid for what we had bought it was divided out between the four there and then, and we were allowed to take a photo of them on condition that we sent them a print. This carving has been carried on by generations of this same family, and we noticed a carving of a Penitent "Chariot of Death", a wooden cart in which was seated the wooden skeleton to represent Death, for this "worship" of the Penitents is a worship of death.

Enquiring the way to Truchas from two youths in a cornfield, we met with only smiles and Spanish, and had to get direction by gestures. As we climbed higher we suddenly passed into a slightly greener world, a thin veil of grass covered the earth, and the bushes became small trees. Behind us stretched mile upon mile of useless arid soil, an endless view of worthless gold beneath the sun—limitless, but on the map of New Mexico a scrap about as big as a postage stamp. There is a touch of Switzerland at Truchas, the village outlined against the pine forests over the valley, and a large wayside cross leaning against the sky. It is high, about nine thousand feet above sea-level, and surrounded by the highest land in the state, rising to thirteen thousand feet. It is a village of flat clay walls leaning at different angles, some in shade and some in sun, and between them you look back to the forests. We passed a hard, brown, little woman who looked about seventy, splitting gnarled piñon logs with an axe; round a corner we ran into another pile of split logs, and then a second woman, about eighty, hacking with a large axe, and it was not long before we passed a third. Outside the village, men were working in the fields of wheat, oats and maize, or riding horses on mysterious journeys, dark, Spanish-looking men like the old Conquistadors, with names like Lopes and Martinez, and who looked at us calmly with large, brown eyes.

With a delightful suddenness, characteristic of the country, the road whisked us from the cultivation to a rugged canyon, and bumped us down to a dry, rocky river bed. Bumping across the boulders we plunged into the forest, green, calm and lovely, and decided to lunch as soon as we came to water. But there was no water, only deep channels cut by storm rain and melting snow, and now as dry as tinder. The sandy track wore its way through the trees, and we came on a family in their home-made ladder-sided cart, a bright group sitting on piles of shopping, and a hound in a spiked collar following. The man gave us directions in very broken English—one small word at a time.

We were looking for Trampas, but could not believe with any faith that the deeply-rutted sandy track was winding to anywhere at all. It just turned and turned deeper into the trees, where the only sound was a huge, vague whisper of wind in the tree-tops. No water, no inhabitants; only the huge silence and a sense of isolation. But we saw it at last, Trampas, in a world of its own among the mountain forests. It is the same adobe village, with a plaza, a balconied store, and a large adobe church. In all the district the Penitent Brothers are strong, and there, in Trampas, instead of having a small Morada set apart from the village, they keep their cart of death in the large church, bloody whips hang on the gallery, and the walls are spattered with the blood of these penitent Good Friday processions.

We came into Trampas by forests and glissades of sands and roads, and we went out by a buried canyon, the road certainly, but an obvious torrent during rain. It was a buried river bed, a cool narrow defile that must have been an invaluable defence from marauding Indians. After a wild mile or two the existence of Trampas was difficult to

believe in ; we traversed an impossible route and were all aching with being tossed for hours in the gallant 'bus.

It was a relief to pass into an open valley of cultivation, another high world of Spanish families, the road running from farm to farm where everyone was busy threshing the wheat, the men galloping a group of horses round and round small ricks to stamp out the grain, the women, with coloured handkerchiefs on their heads, winnowing by tossing the grain into the sunny air. It was all a rich, mellow gold in the evening, and we moved slowly and calmly on the better roads, even the Ford 'bus being under the spell of some queer feeling of the suspension of time and indifference to speed.

In this country, too, lies the Indian pueblo of Picuris, a small but ancient settlement, isolated in the hills, a lonely refuge from the depredations of other Indians, of the ancient Spaniards, or modern commercialism. A dance had been reported and a handful of visitors had gathered, and a few Indians from other villages, among them the handsome figure of Tony Luhan from Taos. The dance was not forthcoming and we sat quietly in the village waiting, sitting on a log, while an ancient cowboy-looking man next us whittled a bit of it he had broken off, sinking deeper into time, forgetting everything but a few adobe houses, the juniper-spotted hills of sand and the warm hours. Presently, into the great serenity and quietness broke the pretty jingling of little bells, and three small boys, all brightly painted bodies, head-dresses and feathers, came out and danced a few small figures. They disappeared and then—silence and waiting again.

Again there was a slight drumming and a slight stir at the far end of the large plaza, in the centre of which had been erected a high, peeled tree surmounted by a dead goat and a

large bulging cotton-bag that we were told held groceries. Some Indian boys ran across the square and climbed to one of the house tops, and some girls scattered from a corner, laughing and shrieking. Behind them emerged four weird, naked figures, their bodies and breasts painted in black and white stripes—Koshare—the mysterious Indian clowns. They began a series of visitations to the houses, going in and out of each one, occasionally appearing with a tortilla in the hand, or with significant wipings of the mouth. After a good deal of this at the far end of the village, they suddenly sighted the small crowd of visitors with exaggerated gestures. They shaded their eyes and scanned us, pointed us out to each other, laughed, and striking up a howling chant these four "bounders" swaggered down to us, stalked up to us and examined us, looking over the crowd very coolly. One of them became a buffalo, pawed the ground and shot clouds of dust over us, another began tipping up his fore and aft flaps—their only covering, while a third pulled a packet of cigarettes from a man's pocket and, lighting up, they swaggered around arm-in-arm. A very nervous intellectual-looking spectator had stood out from the crowd to get a better view, and the four clowns pounced on him, took his pipe from his mouth, had a puff all round, put their arms round his neck, and with excellent clowning, said, "Mel Friend! Good! You! Friend! Good!" and they all insisted upon shaking hands with him. They then began to tease the children, who fled shrieking, and they reduced more than one small mite to real screams and tears. Then a chicken wandered into the square, and producing ridiculous tiny bows and arrows they began stalking the chicken with terrible exaggerations of care. They were good clowns, with all the technique of our circus clown, who is said to be derived from these Koshare. In the end they discovered

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the pole, shot the arrows at the goat, but took good care that the arrows went over their heads into the crowd. Eventually after absurd attempts in which a ladder assisted, one of them climbed the pole for the prizes, and the ceremony now finishes with the wild figure, naked and striped, sitting on top of the pole against a savage background of wooded mountains.

PUPPETS RETURN EAST

WE had to return East to give some performances, and we had to get back to England, but we dallied in the sun to a little more than the last possible moment and to nearly the last dollar. Now that we had to return it was suddenly the East that looked like the barren desert. Winifred would have to wear gloves and stockings ; and I would not be able to wear the blue jean pants. We packed reluctantly, and when we went into Santa Fé for the bus, the first depressing note of urban civilisation struck us—we were the only people wearing straw hats! Labour day had passed, and with it all good little Americans had put away their panamas in the ice-box, and got their felt hats out of cold-storage.

We got into the train and slept, and about all I can remember of the journey was stopping at a small town the next morning and seeing on the station book-stall one single representative of English literature that among all the strange American periodicals looked delightfully familiar—a copy of the *London Mercury*.

By Monday evening we were in Pittsburg, where we stayed at Kingsley House, a Social Settlement in the Italian quarter where other Englishmen had stayed before us, including as we saw from the visitors' book Lord Thompson and Sir Norman Angell. We slept in four-poster beds, in a room with dormer windows, a sloping ceiling, antique furniture and candles—not at all what we expected of Pittsburg.

Personally, what with the hot air, the flowers and the sun-blind, I thought Pittsburg was more like Paris than Pittsburg; but if the central square with the Stephen Foster memorial and the Gothic chapel seems like Europe, it changes with the tall, slender, column of the cathedral of learning which soars skywards with a lofty grandeur of its own. And it is certainly Pittsburg as you look down at night from Mount Washington, and see cars gliding over bridges and in the streets, steamers pushing through the river, trains shunting on the river banks, and, glowing in the distance, furnace volcanoes. We saw more of the country round Pittsburg than the city itself, and more of the educational and cultural work of Kingsley House than life in the raw among the workers, a vast mass drawn from the most illiterate peoples of Europe, and among whom life is so difficult that when one of the Pittsburg University professors drew up a scientific report of the conditions, he was asked to resign from the faculty—almost as if he was accused of inventing the conditions. The fact itself of the need for a Settlement was sufficient indication that life was not all beer and skittles, and we heard much of the great unemployment in this and neighbouring towns. It was small comfort to us to be shown a graph of the rise and fall of employment and to note that prosperity was coincident with a war. Superficially Pittsburg looks much finer than one is led to suppose; it has built itself out of a madly rising steel industry, but it has yet to organise itself on a static, or even a falling industry.

The country, in spite of not being New Mexico, was tolerable! We travelled over the rolling hills among the farms, the fields of Indian corn, the meadows and the woods where here and there a crimson maple stood out, showing the first signs of autumn. It is a coal country, and you come on industrial towns buried in the thick woods,

and pass farms with their own coal pit where, if you care to carry it away, you can get a sack of coal. Most remarkable of all was the Cook Forest Park, over six thousand acres of forest, within easy reach of those industrial towns of Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Johnstown and Altoona. When William Penn landed on his grant in 1681, Pennsylvania was practically a virgin forest about as big as England, a forest that has been entirely cleared except for a section of this park, where some of the original pines and hemlocks remain. The Cook Forest is not to be an amusement park, but is to remain in its natural condition ; it has trails for walking and good roads for cars. It has the winding Clarion river stocked with rainbow trout ; deer are plentiful and an occasional bear is seen ; cotton-tail and snow-shoe rabbits, and squirrels, black, red and grey abound, and there are ninety species of birds, from the ruby-throated hummingbird to the bald eagle. Log cabins can be rented for a dollar a day ; free permission is granted for pitching tents, and for campers or for picnics there are outdoor fireplaces, gasplates, tables and benches. These parks of America are so large and splendid that no one has seen them yet ; if they were a couple of acres of grass, with a privy and a regiment of geraniums inside a green railing, the world would be raving about them.

We had been asked to give a show at Ursinus College, a small, sectarian college with a very good reputation for scholarship ; but—perhaps I should say, therefore—it had an interest in puppets. Indeed, one of the lecturers in French, Dr. Sibbald, who had enjoyed adventures among the traditional guignol showmen of France, had lately published under the title *Marionettes in the North of France* the thesis he had written for his Ph.D., and we were delighted to meet him and have him in our audience. Some

of the students had made and given their own puppet shows, and our Miss Wieand, who had driven us out to Cincinnati, who was, as a distraction from more responsible work, in charge of the puppet department, had herself made and manipulated a company of puppets that were housed in her home in Lancaster. Our show entertained the college and made us new friends, and the next day we went to look at Miss Wieand's puppets, but she was too modest to show them to us, showing us instead her lovely old home in Lancaster, and if you think that America is all "hot music", it would be very good for you to see such a house, so very like an old country house in England, with its handsome, old-fashioned furniture, each chair and table a museum piece. Yet the house stood right in the main street with its long garden behind it, on a very valuable site that many a speculating builder eyes with envy—an aristocratic and somewhat disdainful survival of a more leisurely and dignified day.

In the street outside the house you would have seen the Amish farmers, in their plain traditional clothes, people more removed from "hot music" than any inhabitants of England. This Pennsylvanian Dutch country is one of the most picturesque parts of Eastern America, where the Amish people live as their great grandfathers lived, who left Germany over two hundred years ago, owing to religious persecution. They still use German words and a German grammatical structure of English, and some of the older people cannot be understood by the modern American. They are almost entirely engaged in farming, but make and sell in the market *Lebkuchen* and *Fastnachts*; they have old German painted chests and cupboards and pottery in their homes, and still make patchwork quilts and embroideries. The women wear dark dresses and bonnets, and the men have collarless jackets with no buttons, large black hats, and

never shave after marriage. They have stood out against cars and always use the old-fashioned buggies, and on a market day you will see many of these old vehicles in the streets, a curious note of by-gone America. The children are encouraged to walk for healthy exercise, and our friend told us that if she offers an Amish child a lift more often than not he will refuse. It is in this part of the country one sees red barns with curious round devices painted on the sides and ends. These are to charm away evil spirits, and are called witch signs. We were told the Amish do not use these signs. It is here, too, that one hears the words "to verhex", which means "to bewitch". And instances of verhexing are still remembered, and the fear of being verhexed still remains.

I had heard the Amish and Mennonite peoples spoken of as if they were curiosities, rather ignorant and dismal stick-in-the-muds, but as soon as we saw this country it was obvious, even to our untrained eyes, that the farmhouses and buildings, and all the tillage was about the best we had seen anywhere in the States. You hear this section spoken of as being "the richest farming country in Pennsylvania", rather as if it were a natural accident, but there is reason to believe that the sturdy, moral character of the Amish people is the only reason why their farming is better and richer than anyone else's. It is a fact that they have withstood the depression better than most American farmers. Their principles, of course, begin to wobble in the younger generation. We passed a tiny Amish school over which there was at the moment a fierce dispute between the Educational Authorities and the Amish Elders. The Educational people were up to their old trick of trying to break up family life, but the Amish people have faith in family life; they like their own small school down the road, because the children retain

a greater sense of community and family life, and because they are trained to have more interest in washing the dishes and in farming than in platinum curls or vulgar, ambitious careers. The Amish people, strange to say in these days, have a conscience against sending children out of a decent home to the care of unknown and inexperienced spinsters, and what is more strange and admirable still, they have a sufficient sense of superiority to defy the Educational Authorities and Mumbo-Jumbos, and apparently with success. I hope they keep the little red school among the fields, and are not motored into the town to be "educated", however superior the building and equipment.

We moved quickly, spending a night near Reading at a delightful country house full of books, and we performed to an hilarious audience in an old beamed mill-house. If the show interested the audience, we were interested in our fellow-artist, a Polish lad of fourteen, who had been discovered that morning by the host of the party, Mr. Muhlenberg, and who was tremendously excited at being able to see the puppets and earn his first professional fee. When asked what this was, he had named so small a sum that it was immediately increased. We are sure that no one who heard this spirited, rhythmical, non-stop performance on the accordion, will forget this boy with his face shining with excitement, nor the nervous pride of his older brother, who had come "into the country" with him for company.

Flash! and the scene changes to Westtown School, opened in 1799, when the first forty boarders sat on benches without backs and ate their victuals from pewter plates. The school now has six hundred acres of woodlands, farm, and playing fields, and a large lake for swimming, canoeing and, in winter, skating. And by the lake is an open shed where the students can camp, and cook their food over a wood fire.

The school has a laid-out open air theatre in the woods, where every year a Shakespeare play is performed ; but we put up the puppet theatre in the fine school hall, and enjoyed a performance that was carried along by the enthusiasm and generous appreciation of the school. We stayed with Janet Whitney and her artist husband, Janet Whitney having just published her successful biography of Elizabeth Fry, and while with her met some of the Benet family and paid a visit to N. C. Wyeth, the painter, whose illustrations of Stevenson's works are so well known. Wyeth is a *man*, a stout fellow ; he has curly hair, and a studio full of old guns and model sailing ships. Somewhere in a corner he has some pictures, too, and he hauled out large canvases, vigorous paintings of Maine, the cliffs and seas and the fishermen, all alive, with bright illumination and vivid colour. The fishermen were all his friends. And what a nice house with the large wood fire, the family's paintings round the big room, and the leafy Brandywine country turning red and gold outside, and golden leaves falling on the white, painted house from the artist's own trees. It was pleasant at Westtown and we were stealing into the Fall ; the leaves were turning and the Indian corn was cut and stacked in fantastic cones of great dry leaves crowned with the tasselled head piece that, in the dark, looked like wandering Indians.

Flash! And we were being met at Trenton, and driven out to Flemington by Miss Turner, the County librarian, who met us with the library, or that part of it that travels the countryside. We were to give a performance for the County Library in the Baptist Chapel, a red brick and white stone building outside, with a tall white spire, and a very white and elegant and eighteenth century inside. If all librarians were like Miss Turner we authors would have no

complaints to make on the score of an indiscriminating and apathetic public. But I have a high regard for librarians. They are generally found to know their job in a way that rouses my envy, and they have a fine courage in that most difficult task, not of starting from scratch and educating an illiterate public, but of trying to wean them away from an undigested and indigestible diet of pernicious rubbish to one that gives real nourishment to the mind. Our librarians at home are doing it and for far less pay than is their due, and here in Flemington Miss Turner was doing it, dealing not only with Americans of Anglo-Saxon descent or those who could speak and read English easily, but with people of several nationalities, including many Czechs. She wished the country people to feel at home with her and her library, and judging from our audience she seems to have achieved her wish. It was an enjoyable show, and the evening was made more memorable because we were driven back to Trenton through a terrific storm. We were the only car on the roads: the rain hung like curtains in the air: it was driving through a waterfall. It was Niagara. But we did it, and Miss Turner stuck to driving when every other car had abandoned the road, now flooded, and we missed our train by only three minutes.

Flash! and we were in a train by the side of the Housatonic River travelling into Connecticut. The Fall was in full glory and we were going into the Connecticut hills to see it. The Housatonic is a wide, rushing river, pouring and rippling under the hills of golden woods, curling round brilliant green swards, and under graceful, idle trees, shaking golden leaves on the grass. We got deeper into the hills, snatched passing glimpses of valleys lined with golden trees, and got out of the train at West Cornwall, a village of square white houses under a profusion of golden oaks and beeches.

There was a green, drooping willow by the water mill, and the fresh sound of falling water under an old covered bridge.

We were met by Burt Blakey and an old car, both proper old country codgers, and Burt whistled us away up the hills through the woods, turning from the surfaced road to a dirt road, and then to a dirtier and bumpier road, and then to a grassy, rutted track. We were following a pictograph of a running fox nailed to trees along the route, climbing all the time through a misty rain, and getting colder and colder as we rose through the endless forest of autumn trees. The old car came to rest at last on a bald patch of pasture on a small hilltop. Burt Blakey offered no explanation; *he* knew that we had arrived, and consequently concluded that *we* knew we had arrived, and when we saw our friends scrambling through some bushes we did know that we had arrived at Yelping Hill.

This is the way American college professors amuse themselves on vacation. Ten of them have bought several hills, six or seven hundred acres in extent, and portioned it out in spacious plots. They put up tents for visitors, build rock gardens, swim in a lake and recover from being professors. I am not sure they are always so energetic as these pursuits suggest. Our friends, who we suspected had only got out of bed just in time to meet us, will, perhaps, give you a better idea of the sort of life that is lived on Yelping Hill; incidentally *they* have an old mill as a community house, where they have installed a cook, and meet for meals, and music, and folk-dancing. They started with six or seven hundred acres, but since then a fabulous number of acres of the adjacent forests have been turned into a National Park, and now the ten families can enjoy practically a whole primeval world.

It rained that evening and was very cold after New

Mexico. In the night there was a frost, and as the water was frozen, and as we had been pouring water over ourselves for six months, we dressed joyfully, and very quickly, without washing. It was frigid on the high hills, and we set out to walk and get warm. We dropped into a valley, walking under festoons of scarlet berries and golden leaves of Bitter Sweet, and walking over the Appalachian Trail, that spends some of its three thousand miles in these woods. We ascended a steep hillside among scrub and rocks, always the autumn trees over us, and autumn undergrowth around, including the plants of sassafras, which I had always thought was a patent medicine. We passed remains of stone walls, rotting remains of snake fences, and foundations of houses, for all these woods had been farms until about fifty years ago. The poor soil and the attraction of a rising industrial growth had led them to be abandoned, and it was strange to come upon an orchard in the middle of the woods, the lonely apple trees wasting their fruit on the ground. At the top of the hill we came out to a rock, and standing there you said to yourself, "These Americans are overdoing it again." It was all so bright; the near trees such a vivid yellow, or so very red, or such a deep, deep glowing crimson, or rich gold; and the pines were so very green, and through the thinning leaves you could see the blue mist of another hill—a blue mist shot faintly with red and gold. And there was so much of it, hill upon hill, with valleys between, great rolling waves of wooded hills, all a gleaming, crusty russet made up of trees in every tone from pale yellow to a deep crimson, broken only by a ghostly filigree, here and there, of white and silver birches. Americans had always said, "You ought to see the Fall." Well, here we were looking at it, with a few wandering snow-flakes mingling with the golden leaves—but do you suppose we believed it?

We got the train back to New York, and for some distance at each stopping-place men and women entered the carriage, arms full of leaves and berries. It was Sunday—to-morrow, alas! was Monday—and these people were teachers, professors, social workers, artists, business women, dressed in good, robust country clothes, having been, no doubt, as we had, to a country hut in the hills to walk, fish and talk. And talk they did. I like these American long carriages with seats so arranged that one can have a conversation *à quatre*, though this time it was a little disturbing to one's own efforts to read, when the lady in the seat across the aisle would read aloud to the three others, in the most nasal, stage-American voice we had as yet encountered. But it was all very cheerful. The carriage was warm and snug after the cold air and the rain; people from the same places knew each other, changed places and "visited" each other. The use of this word "visit" to mean a chat of a few minutes was strange at first, and I remember the shock I experienced when staying with a friend—she, Winifred and I were shell-ing peas together—to hear her say, pushing away peas and bowl, "Now, we'll have a little visit together." The cheerfulness was contagious: one became part of the family, and, quite unconsciously, an interested eavesdropper. Did Arthur finally decide that Miriam was the one to be chosen? Was it better, after all, to get that housecoat at Altman's or Macy's? And we agreed that it was true that the reason the New England farmer had weathered the depression was because, unlike the Westerner, he had thought of farming as primarily providing food for his own family, and not in purely commercial terms; and we felt very sympathetic with Gin, whose taxes were certainly too heavy, as all New York taxes were. In fact, we were enjoying ourselves when we were back in New York, with only the thin

partition of a day or two between us and our return to England.

We were not quite done with performances. We went out to the Sleighton Farm School at Darling, which is "... the result of the vision of a group of men who recognised the importance of removing boys and girls from contact with adult offenders in jails and prisons... it is designed rather as a school, than a place of punishment." Expecting the worst from this collection of young villains, and a school heavy with depressing constraint, we arrived at the three hundred and fifty acre farm and its many bright, separate buildings in the sun under the autumn trees, which looked more like a fashionable suburb than a reformatory. We were "staggered" as we were shown round what was, in reality, a first-class boarding establishment for young ladies. The four hundred odd girls live in ten cottages, built on a wide avenue bordered with great oak trees. The girls have a system of self-government, and we saw some of them doing their own cooking, under a skilled instructress, in magnificent kitchens. In conducting the cottages they acquire, under expert advice, a complete knowledge of housekeeping and dressmaking, but they have a thorough high school education as well—all the usual studies, with home nursing and special stress on poetry, nature study, biography, current events, music, and good reading. Personally I began to wish that I was a girl and could indulge in a first offence in order to qualify for admission to the school. It was all like a holiday village, with girls, in bright cotton dresses, roller-skating down the avenue, going off into the fields like an opera chorus of peasant girls, strolling about the lawns, and a very cheerful group just assembled, with bags of lunch, to set out on a cross-country walk.

Miss Morrison, the Head, walked us round, and spoke of

PUPPETS THROUGH AMERICA

it all with the natural enthusiasm of an amateur. She is an accomplished scholar, but accompanies her academic dignity with a gentle nature that conducts the school as if it were her own home. In the fields the farm work was in progress, one field an extraordinarily busy, mechanised sight with three tractors, two horse ploughs, another stationary tractor, and the workers' cars at the gates. And we had a very good idea of the wealth of its produce at dinner, cooked by some of the girls and served by them. They bore in dish after dish of the farm produce, more to show their prowess than with any decent sense of feeding us, I am sure—piles of beautifully dressed cauliflower, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, beans, peas, curly broccoli all permanent waves, salads, pickles in abundance, yea, and pie, black and yellow Hallowe'en sweets, and ice-cream. Boy! What a dinner? So—what? Well, we had to give a performance after this, which must have been up to standard, or even more so, for we cannot remember a more lively, intoxicating, and appreciative audience.

The last performance of all was at Swarthmore College, and our stay in America ended at the House in the Wood, sadly and joyfully, with a Hallowe'en Party, all black and orange, and presided over by a turnip lantern and the hospitable genius of the United States.

And so we left America, and as it was Winifred's words in the beginning that took me to America, it shall be her words that end this book.

"We had arrived when the leaves were breaking on the trees; we left as they began to fall. It had been a lovely six months without a moment of boredom. We had seen only a fragment of America—there is a lot of it—but we had learnt a lot. We had learnt, for instance, that America is

America ; that she no longer looks to Europe or takes her inspiration from England, but is creating her own art and literature, moulding her own life into its own shape ; but that, even so, interest in and knowledge of European affairs is tremendous. In no place we visited did we find either the apathy or the ignorance with regard to major European problems that one finds in parts of Europe itself, and it was possible to get a more complete and unbiassed view of European political trends, where there is a press that depends upon a public drawn from every European country, and with some of the ablest foreign reporters existing, than from our own subtly-censored press. Americans realise what enormous stakes are being played for in this cruel and wicked game of war that is laid out in Europe, and it makes them sharp critics of their own domestic policy. We saw something, and heard more, of the fight between the two labour unions—the C.I.O. (Committee of Industrial Organisation) and the A.F.L. (American Federation of Labour), a fight likely to be long and bitter, that may change the face of industrial America ; of the work organised by the government to defeat unemployment—the W.P.A.—and we were often travelling over roads that were the result of this work ; there was the Tennessee Valley Association—the T.V.A.—over which controversy is now raging with American enthusiasm, not only a scheme for the development of electrical power, but a whole integrated scheme for the social reconstruction of a large area, and about which an excellent book has been written by Odette Keun.

“ But this book is an account of our journeyings with the puppets—there are many other books that one could write on America—and the America we saw is a very different one from that of the screen or of plays from Broadway. (Some of the landscape of America is made familiar to one on the

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cinema.) It is the America of the ordinary citizen, busy with his own life in his own home and town, the America that we wish all Englishmen could know, a wholesome, intelligent, cultivated, warm-hearted people, who exist in thousands and thousands to the gangster's one.

"We left America sadly, for if Americans seem more pessimistic at times than Europeans about the future of civilisation, it is, perhaps, because the onlooker does see more of this horrible game; yet it is with Americans that the chance to keep alive all that is meant by freedom and true democracy remains. The battle is only beginning in America, but the Americans are vigorous and young, but if young, no fools. They retain much of the old pioneering spirit, and thinking of all those who created America, one would like to say that pioneering is not only to develop new trails, but to re-discover old ones. Good-luck, America!"



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